STORY OF AN OLD TOWN

by

A. P. DEMILT

STORY OF AN OLD TOWN

With Reminiscences of Early Nebraska and Biographies of Pioneers.

—BY—

A. P. DeMILT

A Narrative of Truth Describing the Birth of Nebraska, and Its Progress, of Its Oldest Towns, and Its First Settlers.

PUBLISHED BY
DOUGLAS PRINTING COMPANY
OMAHA, NEBRASKA
1902

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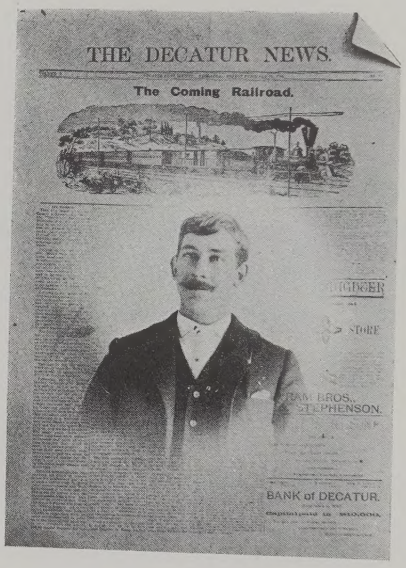
TRIO REPRINTS

Box 311
Decatur, NE 68020
1983

Printed by
WALSWORTH
PUBLISHING
COMPANY
MARCELINE, MISSOURI 64656



A. P. DeMilt, Author.

INTRODUCTION.

This work as now presented to the public has been arduous and painstaking, its object being to array a set of facts without deviation from the truth, portraying a part of the early history of Nebraska and its inhabitants.

The task has been laborious as well as tedious, commanding the most minute research and consuming many years. To Robert W. Furnas, Geo. W. Doane, Capt. Silas T. Leaming, Henry Fontenelle, A. B. Fuller, Christopher C. Dunn, Dr. J. B. Whittier, John Lewis, James Ashley, and a host of others, the author is deeply indebted for the valuable assistance rendered. Without their co-operation the work would have been impossible. Entering Nebraska as a vast wilderness we leave it as one of the prosperous states of the union; certainly a most wonderful transformation. In picturing this great change we not only present general characteristics but personal, thereby making it of interest to the individual as well as the public. The author is positive in his statement that within this book historical events will be found of our state that no other book of like kind contains. In fact on this point he has been

exceedingly cautious; an avoidance of repetition. In the presentment of dates, they have not been used unless verified; and his greatest enjoyment to record something which other writers have left undone or overlooked. This work is not copious nor complete, but what has been said, is simple, truthful and instructive, and upon perusal the readers will have at their "tongue's end" a graphic and concise history of the state. No embellishments have been attempted, and all events treated abruptly, keeping but one vital point in constant view—the truth. Hoping the work will meet with the approval of the public and earn for itself at least a little merit, the author humbly signs himself

Your servant, A. P. De Milt.

STORY OF AN OLD TOWN.

CHAPTER I.

LEWIS AND CLARK—THE COUNCIL BLUFFS—DEATH OF BLACKBIRD AND HIS BURIAL—WOODS THE FIRST SETTLER—TREATY OF OMAHA INDIANS—ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT—REMOVAL TO THEIR PRESENT HOME.

The settlement of Nebraska begins with the expedition of Lewis and Clark; Captain Meriwether Lewis of the United States army, and Captain William Clark, appointed by President Thomas Jefferson in 1803 to navigate the Ohio and Missouri rivers, determine the typography of the then unknown west, and make overtures of peace with hostile Indians. The first notable pause that would be of any direct interest to the reader as a Nebraskan, by these famous explorers, was at Council Bluffs, so called, for the reason a treaty of peace was ratified by them and a tribe of Indians, upon

these hills in 1804. Prior to the arrival of Lewis and Clark, it was an Indian village; in 1819, Fort Atkinson, a military post, was established here; and now known as the village of Fort Calhoun.

Their next stop, which was in the summer of the same year, was at the tomb of Blackbird, a huge mound of dirt, on a high bluff, overlooking the river, ten miles north from the townsite of Decatur, at the mouth of the creek which bears his name. Lewis and Clark state in their diary, they planted a small American flag on top of Blackbird's grave. This chief was the leader at that time of the powerful Me-ha tribe, better known now as the Omahas. Blackbird died in a smallpox epidemic in 1800, not far from where he was buried. Tradition tells, it was by his own request the remains were interred on the hill. The chief on his death-bed instructed his people to this effect: "The white man is my friend; therefore let my spirit rest in peace on the highest hill of the Missouri river, so that as they pass, up and down, I may see them, and greet them with pleasant smiles, and welcome them to my children, and my land of beautiful forests and prairies; of peace and plenty."

Blackbird was a smart, sagacious chief, both feared and loved by his people. He was a powerful factor in establishing peace between the white man and the

Indian. A commission as chief of the Me-has was presented to Wa-shing-a-sar-be, by "El Baron de Carondalet," at the City of New Orleans, May, 1796; the Indian title translated into English meaning Black Bird.

The great chief's affection for his pale face brother was almost childlike, and his fondness for little nic-nacs, and sweetmeats, a weakness.

By some writers Blackbird is recorded as sanguine, treacherous and crafty; a man who performed acts of goodness for an evil purpose. Others parade him as a sachem worthy of respect, a prototype of the ideal North American Indian, whose moral strength and natural love of humankind disseminated among the people of his tribe and their associates, the white man and the Indian, the bond of peace and the seeds of mutual companionship.

Whatever the unwritten pages of the man's soul may be, this fact cannot be disputed even by the foolish skeptic and illiterate prejudiced. Like Washington, he was for harmony and peace, a virtue within itself; and strove for the union of co-operation between his people and the United States Government, a noble cause in which he was eminently successful.

Tradition tells it, handed down by the lips of western pioneers, that he learned the art of using strychnine

from a post teacher, and in this manner, exterminated his antagonistic sub-alternates of the tribe. Wa-shina-a-sar-be was mysterious. He would go forth in the morning, with the rising of the sun, so the fable runs, and instruct the Wa-kar-me, medicine man, to announce among the tents of the people, in a loud voice, proclaiming that a certain warrior would die, upon a fixed day and time, because the Great Father had demanded his presence in Spiritland. The doomed man invariably died, and the literal cause of the death would never be known beyond the fact, that it was so ordained by Blackbird, and the spirit of the condemned had been called away by God.

In the month of August, 1896, the writer visited the grave of Blackbird, in company with F. W. Parker and Chas. S. Huntington of Omaha, Marshal Hamilton of Florence, and Henry Fontenelle of Decatur. There was not a vestige left of this huge mound, which was at the time of his burial about 45 feet high and 30 feet in circumference. Time and rains have worn it away, and the pomp and ostentation of man, in his obsequies of the dead, displayed by earnest zeal and touching pathos, one hundred years ago, is now an incident of the past. All traces of the mound are gone, and those not familiar with the location of the grave, and the corroborating evidence of the Indians, it would

be difficult for them to identify or designate the spot. The slightest indication of a disturbance of the surroundings has been erased by the powerful and beautiful laws of Nature. Again the wild oat grasses wave in graceful accents to summer breezes, and here and there on little knolls and small patches of table land, flourish a labyrinth of native fragrant flowers. A single oak tree about twenty feet high, the trunk about eight inches in diameter, and about fifty years old, stands to the north of the grave, perhaps a distance of fifty yards. A few molar teeth and some pieces of bone were picked up upon the point which Mr. Fontenelle located as the grave of Blackbird, and Mr. Parker, who is a student of archaeology, declared them to be human.

The interment of Blackbird included much show of pageantry. He was buried in a sitting position, facing the river, and his horse, a splendid animal, was entombed alive with his master. A full membership of the tribe was present, their bodies decorated with bright colors of paint, gaudy feathers, buckskin clothing, inlaid with fancy bead work. Their holy man pronounced the benedictions for the repose and the safe guidance of the soul to the Spiritland. A symposium, consisting of wild animal meats, a native root tea, soups, and a bread made of corn; war, bear, scalp, medicine, buffalo, and

woman dances; horse and foot races of long and short distances; lasting five days, was participated in by the tribe. Many valuable presents and the chattels of the dead man, were given away to the poor, best dancers for endurance and grace, and winners of the races. At night, relatives, friends and the medicine man would gather around the grave, and sing the Indian death chant and wail, continuing until morning. In addition to this, each night, for successive five nights, a fire was built upon the mound to light the way of the soul to the Spiritland, and a quantity of food deposited as nourishment, for the progress and determination of the journey.

* * *

The first involuntary permanent settlement by a white man, within the present corporate limits of Decatur, was Woods, in the year of 1837, at the mouth of Wood Creek, named after him. He came up along the river, from an extreme southern settlement, with a party of explorers. He took sick and died here, and was buried on the hill back of Henry Fontenelle's house. The next invasion, so to speak, of any importance, by the paleface, was in the spring of 1853, by Col. Peter A. Sarpy and Clement Lambert of Bellevue. At that time they were in the employment of the American Fur Company. Their camp was at the mouth of

Wood Creek, and they came up to meet a band of Indians who were coming in from a buffalo and deer hunt, and bartered with them for their furs.

* * *

It was in the month of September of this same year, by the United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs Geo. W. Manypenny, that he visited the Omahas to negotiate for the purchase of their vast territory. The overtures of the government's representatives were listened to with favor, and for the purpose of conferring with the President of the United States, at Washington, under the direction of Major Gatewood, agent for the Omahas, another general meeting of the tribe was held, and a council of chiefs were selected, Logan Fontenelle, principal chief and spokesman; the purpose for the arrangement and ratifying of a treaty which should be satisfactory to the Indians. The conference, President Pierce upon the part of the government, and Logan Fontenelle and sub-chiefs, upon the part of the Omaha tribe, met at the Capitol, Washington, D. C., on March 16, 1854, for final consummation. The Omahas reserved as a home 300,000 acres, where they now live, and took possession during the summer of 1854.

With the exception of a few minor details, following is a truthful copy of the treaty and articles of

agreement, comprising the consideration of the United States Government, and upon the part of the Omaha Indian tribe:

Treaty between the Omaha Indians and the United States Government, executed on the 21st day of June, 1854, and signed by Franklin Pierce, President, and W. L. Marcy, Secretary of State:

Whereby the Omaha Indians relinquish all rights to their large territory in favor of the government, reserving a tract of land, 300,000 acres, where they now live, as their future home. Consideration: To pay annually to tribe $42,000, for three years, commencing Jan. 1, 1855. To pay $30,000 per annum, for term of ten years, next succeeding three years. To pay $20,000 per annum, for the term of fifteen years, next succeeding ten years. To pay $10,000 per annum for the term of twelve years, next succeeding fifteen years.

The Omaha Indians to cede to the United States all lands west of the Missouri river, and south of a line drawn due west from a point in the center of the main channel of said Missouri river, due east of where the Ayoway river disembogues out of the bluffs to the western part of the Omaha country, and forever relinquish all rights and title to the country south of said land.

The Omahas relinquish all claims for money or other thing, under former treaties, and likewise all claims which they may have heretofore at any time up to land on the east side of Missouri River. Provided, the Omahas shall be entitled to and receive from the government the unpaid balance of the $25,000 appropriated for their use by act of August 30, 1851.

The Omahas agree, so soon after the United States shall have complied with the necessary provision for the fulfilling of this instrument, they will vacate the ceded country, and remove to lands reserved for them.

The within named moneys are to be paid to the Omahas, or expended for their use and benefit, under the direction of the President of the United States, and for such beneficial objects as in his judgment will be calculated to advance them in moral laws, education, and civilization; also for buildings, opening farms, breaking land, providing stock, agricultural implements, seeds, etc., provisions, clothing, and merchandise, iron, steel, arms and ammunition, mechanics and tools, and for medical purposes.

That the sum of $41,000 to be paid out and expended under the direction of the President, and in such manner as he shall approve, for the removal of the Omahas to their new home, subsistance for one year, and the expenses of the delegation, who may be appointed to

make the exploration, and for the fencing and breaking up of 200 acres of land at their new home, and for the settlement of the affairs. And when the Indians in council have expressed themselves satisfied then it shall be deemed and taken for their new home, but if otherwise, the President is to cause a new location.

The President may from time to time at his discretion, cause the whole or such portion of the land hereby reserved, as he may think proper, or of such land as may be selected, in lieu thereof, as provided, to be surveyed into lots, and to assign to such Indian or Indians of said tribe as are willing to avail themselves of the privilege, and who will locate on the same as a permanent home: Single person, one-eighth of a section; family of two, one-quarter section; family of six, and not exceeding ten, one-quarter section for every additional five members; and the President may at his discretion issue a patent to such persons or families, and shall be exempt from levy, sale or forfeiture, which shall continue in force until a state constitution embracing such lands in the boundary shall have been formed and the legislature of the state shall remove the restrictions; said restrictions by the state not to be removed without the consent of Congress.

Should the Omahas determine to make this new territory their new home, the United States agrees to

erect for the Omahas at their new home, a grist and saw mill, and keep the same in repair, and provide a miller for ten years; also to erect a good blacksmith-shop, supply the same with tools and keep it in repair ten years, and provide a blacksmith for a like period; and an experienced farmer for the term of ten years, to instruct the Indians in agriculture.

The annuities of the Indians shall not be taken to pay the debts of individuals.

The Omahas acknowledge their dependence on the government of the United States and promise to be friendly with all the citizens thereof, and pledge themselves to commit no depredations on the property of such citizens. Should this pledge be violated, and the fact satisfactorily proven before the agent, the property taken shall be returned, or in default thereof, or if injured or destroyed, compensation may be made by the government out of their annuities. Nor will they make war on other tribes, except in self-defense; but will submit matters of difference between them and other Indians, to the government, or its agent, for decision, and abide thereby.

The Omahas acknowledge themselves indebted to Lewis Saunsico (a half-breed) for services, the sum of $1,000, which they have not been able to pay, and the United States agrees to pay the same.

The Omahas are desirous to exclude the use of ardent spirits from their country, and to prevent their people from drinking the same, and therefore it is provided that any Omaha who is guilty of bringing liquor into their country, or drinks liquor, may have his or her proportion of the annuities withheld from him or her for such time as the President may determine.

The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church has on the lands of the Omahas, a manual labor boarding school for the education of the Omaha and Ottoe and other Indian youth, which is now in successful operation, and as it will be some time before the necessary buildings can be erected on the reservation, and desirous that the school should not be suspended, it is agreed that the said board shall have four adjoining quarter sections of land, so as to include as near as may be all the improvements heretofore made by them; and—the President is authorized to issue to proper authorities of said board a patent in fee simple for such quarter sections.

The Omahas agree that all the necessary roads, highways, and railroads, which may be constructed as their country improves, and the lines of which may run through such tract, as may be reserved for their permanent home, shall have a right-of-way through the reservation, first a compensation being paid therefor, in money.

The treaty shall be obligatory on the contracting parties as soon as the same shall be ratified by the President and Senate of the United States.

(Signed) GEO. W. MANYPENNY,
Commissioner.

Signed: Shongaska, or Logan Fontanelle; Esthamaga, or Joseph La Flesche; Gratamahje, of Standing Hawk; Gahhegagahgingah, or Little Chief; Tah-Wahgahha, or Village Maker; Wahnokega, or Noise; Sodanahze, or Yellow Smoke.

Executed in the presence of James M. Gatewood, Indian Agent; James Goszler, Charles Calvert, James D. Kerr, Henry Beard, Alfred Chapman; and Louis Saunsoci, interpreter.

In the executive session Senate of the United States, April 17, 1854, it was resolved by a two-thirds vote of the senate present concurring: That the Senate advise and consent to the ratification of the articles of agreement and convention made and concluded in the City of Washington on the 16th day of March, 1854, by George W. Manypenny, as agent, and the already named Omaha Indian council; that being thereto duly authorized by said tribe; with following amendment: Article 3; strike out "1851," and insert 1852.

FRANKLIN PIERCE,
President.

Attest:
ASHBURY DICKENS, Secretary.

CHAPTER TWO.

NEBRASKA AS A TERRITORY—THE FIRST GOVERNOR—DEATH OF BURT—LOCATION OF THE CAPITOL—NEBRASKA'S OLDEST TOWN—FIRST NEWSPAPER—ADMISSION AS A STATE—LIST OF GOVERNORS—INDIAN TRADERS—DECATUR TOWNSITE AND FERRY CO.—INCORPORATORS—THE ENGINEER'S MAP.

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The act which admitted Nebraska as a territory was passed by Congress, May 4, 1854. At a public gathering in the little historical village of Bellevue in the summer of the same year, Rev. Wm. Hamilton was elected as provisional governor, a Presbyterian missionary, who in the latter part of his life made Decatur his home, and died at this place.

Francis Burt was the first executive officer of the territory by appointment of the government, assuming the seat of authority, October 8, 1854. He was a native of Pendleton, South Carolina, and a man of about 45 years; broad intellectual characteristics, and one who would have accomplished much good for our state had he lived. Governor Burt died shortly after his arrival to Nebraska Territory. He had only controlled the reigns of government ten days when he passed away. The date and place of his death is Octo-

ber 18, 1854, at the old Presbyterian Mission House at Bellevue. Mr. Burt was conscious of his condition, and retained his presence of mind to the last breath. Rev. Wm. Hamilton was at the dying governor's bedside, to assist the dying man in bodily comforts, and administer to him the condolence of a Christian's faith and love. It was Rev. Hamilton who closed the eyes, which should never more witness the enactments upon the panorama of humanity's theatre.

After the death of Governor Burt, Secretary Thos. B. Cuming became the acting governor of the territory. He stated to Rev. Hamilton if a donation of 100 acres was given him, he would use his influence to locate the capitol at Bellevue. Mr. Hamilton rejected the proposition most strongly, and using his own words, replied: "Not a foot of land to the man, sir." After considerable personal animosity and political manipulation, and the worst of the difficulties overcome, the capitol was located at Omaha.

The first territorial convention of the legislature, of the Territory, which was held in Omaha, was called to order by the gavel of Gov. Cuming, January 16, 1855. Those who represented Burt county at this memorial gathering were B. R. Folsom, as councilman, of Tekamah; and A. C. Purple, as representative, of Tekamah; the former gentleman also the founder of the city of Tekamah.

Bellevue is beyond all doubt the oldest settlement by white people in the state. 1823 an Indian agency was established here; but even prior to this time there was a trader's post, in the interests of the American Fur Company. It is quite possible the Indian trader made his debut in Nebraska just after the beginning of 1800, but beyond this date, any statement of the white man, in the character of a post-trader in Nebraska, would be doubtful. In 1846, Rev. Ed McKinney, a Presbyterian missionary, was sent out by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions to do missionary work among the Indians at this point. He built for himself that same year a log shanty to reside in, and in 1848, under his supervision a mission house was erected to instruct Indian children in. On January 19, 1854, Bellevue was incorporated as a village, and among those who took part in its organization were Col. Peter A. Sarpy and Commodore Steven Decatur. The first newspaper published in Nebraska Territory was at Bellevue, Nov. 14, 1854; Thos. Morton, editor. The first church in Nebraska was also erected here.

The incorporation of Omaha was the same year as Bellevue, only a trifle later, Sept. 1, 1854. Florence as a village is older than Omaha or Bellevue, its incorporation taking place in 1853, upon the site where a Mormon band camped in 1845. In 1848 the Mor-

mons were ordered off by the Indian agent. Some of the band crossed the river and went over into Iowa, but the most of them immigrated to Salt Lake. In their movement to the west, Florence was the general station and starting point for their wagon trains.

Tekamah may be recorded as manifesting indications of life, 1855. There were two log houses and one tent, and the population about eight people. As incorporated villages, Decatur and Tekamah are about the same age, but as a settlement, Decatur is one year the older.

Decatur receives its origin from three Indian traders of Bellevue, in 1854, Col. Peter A. Sarpy, Henry Fontanelle, and Clemet Lambert, who built log houses, and transacted business with the Omaha Indians who had just moved up.

A chronological table of the governors of Nebraska as a territory, and their homes, is as follows; also giving the date of inauguration:

Francis Burt, Bellevue, Oct. 16, 1854.

Mark W. Bard, Omaha, Feb. 20, 1855.

W. A. Richardson, Omaha, Jan. 12, 1858.

Samuel W. Black, Omaha, May 2, 1858.

Alvin Saunders, Omaha, May 15, 1861.

Nebraska was admitted as a state March 11, 1867. Following is a list of the governors, their homes and

the date of executive inauguration:

David Butler, Pawnee City, Feb. 20, 1867.

Robt. W. Furnas, Brownville, Jan. 13, 1873.

Silas Garber, Omaha, Jan. 11, 1875.

Albinus Nance, Osceola, Jan. 9, 1879.

John W. Dawes, Crete, Jan. 4, 1883.

John M. Thayer, Omaha, Jan. 8, 1891.

Lorenzo Crounse, Fort Calhoun, Jan. 13, 1893.

Silas A. Holcomb, Broken Bow, Jan. 3, 1895-97.

Wm. A. Poynter, Albion, Jan. 3, 1899.

The incorporation of Decatur took place in the fall of 1856. The exact date is not known, as there is no record of it. Its incorporators were S. A. Decatur, Thos. H. Whitacre, T. H. Hineman, George W. Mason and Herman Glass. The name of the incorporation was "The Decatur Townsite and Ferry Company." Mason was its attorney and secretary. Over $12,000 was invested in improvements and the laying out of the town. The next spring, Jones, Brown and Charley Porter of New York State came out and purchased some stock of the incorporation. At that time shares were worth from $40 to $50. This was the year that S. T. Leaming came, and when the news got out that he was a civil engineer and railroad surveyor of the I. C. A. L. R. R., and had purchased a large tract of land adjoining the townsite, people went wild, and

stock in the Decatur Townsite and Ferry Co. jumped in two weeks from $40 to $1,100 a share.

In the spring of 1857, about the time that Geo. W. Doane arrived here, the town was laid out and surveyed by Thos. H. Whitacre, assisted by Silas T. Leaming. A map of the town was drafted by Mr. Whitacre, and lithographed in St. Louis. In the southeast portion of the map is the following recommendation in script letters:

"Thos. H. Whitacre, Topographical and Civil Engineer, Decatur, N. T."

Decatur is situated on the west bank of the Missouri River, 42 parallel of North Latitude. The river banks are high above the highest water marks of themselves and offered one of the best landings on the river, consisting of a tenacious clay mixed with limestone. The timber on both banks of river prove to full satisfaction that the river has never changed or washed. Timber in great abundance of good quality on the east side of river. The Iowa Central Railroad when completed will terminate at this place and from here west a very practical railroad line offers either to the north bend of the Platte River, or on a due line to the south pass, making this on the most direct and practical line of the Atlantic and Pacific railroad."

And now I invite my readers to go with me into

pathways and among the everglades of the past, and as we move along in these sacred and interesting channels, I will recite for him or her, reminiscences of the first settlers of Decatur; the men who witnessed and took part in its incorporation, assisted in its progress, and made it possible for the little village to subsist upon its own environments, and tend to a future which might bring for it, some day, by the emulations of its natural undeveloped commercial possibilities, the successes and advantages of a large and prosperous metropolis. In the foregoing chapters, a general outline of the condition of Nebraska will also be given, as found by the hardy pioneer; and many of the most important events which transpired throughout the territory will also be presented. In the preceding chapters, the author is quite evident this field has been carefully gone over. The pioneers of Northeastern Nebraska will next be dealt with.

CHAPTER THREE.

GRAPHIC AND PITHY BIOGRAPHIES OF DECATUR'S EARLIEST SETTLERS—CAPTAIN PORTER, DR. WHITACRE, COL. SARPY, LAMBERT, OAKLEY, FONTENELLE, FULLER, CANFIELD, OWENS, ENGLEMAN, AND OTHERS—THE FIRST MAYOR—THE FIRST VILLAGE ELECTION—OPENING SESSION OF COUNCIL—COPIES OF ELECTIONS—NOTORIOUS CLAIM CLUBS OF '56-'57—JACK MORROW'S CLOSE CALL.

This chapter bubbles over with fascinating interest, because it introduces to the reader the personality of the actors who made it possible for Decatur to become a village, and live; the staid, invincible characters who fought and faced the vicissitudes of the wilderness and gave to their posterity a future which teems with wealth and golden opportunity. Upon this same ground where they chased and shot the deer and buffalo for their meat and subsistance, today there rolls up heavenward clouds of smoke from the untiring factory, and the harmony which oscilates from the great wheel of commercial industry is sweet music to their successive and progressive generations. These biographies are chopped into short paragraphs, de-

void of embellishments, and so arranged as to be convenient for ready reference.

Charles Porter, a captain in the United States army during the Indian outbreak, came to Decatur from New York State with a man named Jones in 1857. They brought with them a steam mill, but could never get it to operate. Bunked with Leaming in his sod house for a long time. Porter was engaged in the merchandise business part of the time and John D. McMurphy was one of his clerks. Porter now resides in Brooklyn, New York, employed in the Government navy yards and has charge of the lumber department.

The "Turn Around Tavern," a shanty made of cottonwood slabs, owner, Mat Wilber, was one of the first buildings of Decatur. After its discontinuance as a hotel, it was occupied by Sam Hollard of Council Bluffs, a young man of much ability, who used it for a merchandise store. Hollard was sent here by Dr. Horn, also of Council Bluffs. Carried a stock of groceries, liquors and other stuffs. Quite successful for a while, but grew careless and finally failed. Drifted into the habit of ducking his troubles in the bowl of dissipation and went back to his Council Bluffs home when he died. Dr. Horn was a staunch friend of Hollard's and cared for him to the last.

Captain Silas T. Leaming, a native of New York State, came here in the fall of 1856, the year of the incorporation. Bought the claim where he now lives from a man named Rose, paying him $6,400 in gold for it, consisting of three hundred and twenty acres. This was the year before the Government survey had been made. Also pre-empted one hundred and sixty acres and kept a good horse. Had to run the animal twice to Omaha, where the registrar's office was, a Mr. Parker in charge, to save his land from jumpers. The captain slept in a sod house on his land, and took his meals with Wilson, the keeper of the tavern. Early part of his life in Decatur interested in real estate. Bought 1,000 acres of land across the river and a number of shares of Decatur townsite stock. Was positive that a railroad was coming and located here on the strength of that belief. A railroad company was organized in Decatur in 1857, of which Mr. Leaming was appointed chief engineer. As his assistants he secured the services of Don Barker and John McBride, both residing in town at the time and thoroughly qualified to fill the positions. These two gentlemen were formerly employed as surveyors for the I. C. & A. L. R. R., now known as the Chicago & Northwestern. Don was an old bachelor; went to Wyoming and died there. John McBride is remem-

bered as a young fellow who visited with Commodore Decatur and made his headquarters there. He was a sport, fond of dogs, and pretty girls, and enjoyed hunting and fishing. Went from here to California.

Two brothers, Ben Gilbert and John Oak, natives of Sweden, made their home here in 1857, but did not stay long. Gilbert homesteaded a piece of land nine miles south on the bluff road, and Oak one hundred and sixty acres on Silver Creek, over the bridge west of the poor farm. The names Gilbert and Oak was granted to them by an act of the Territorial Legislature. In 1865 Oak pre-empted the townsite on which the city of Oakland has been built and named the town. Went from there to Homer; built a grist mill, bought some property, failed and died. Gilbert still lives on his homestead and is one of Burt county's prosperous farmers.

T. H. Hineman, one of the incorporators, came over the river from Onawa in 1855. Homesteaded a piece of land south of town known as the Hineman farm. Owned considerable Decatur property and was worth about $12,000. Native of New York State and born October 22, 1818. Latter part of his life lived with the Canfield and Fuller families. Slipped on the sidewalk and broke his leg, which caused his death, February 25, 1888. Sick two weeks. Mrs. A.

B. Fuller has a twenty-five cent American coin which Hineman carried in his pocket since he was a boy. It was made the same year he was born. Hineman's surname was Truman Hart, but for short, as he laughingly put it, called himself "Truehearted."

Jeremiah Carter, from Pennsylvania, arrived in 1856; took a claim west of town and in later years deeded it to Mrs. A. B. Fuller to care for him until he died. Queer character; a rough but very faithful old man. In 1860 took care of the stables at this place for the Western Stage Company and Mail Route running from Sioux City to Omaha. When Carter first came here he boarded with Hobbs and at the Brown Hotel. He was a drummer boy in the war of 1812 and received a pension of $12 a month. Died at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fuller, February 7, 1882, and was buried up on the hill. Born in New York State, February 15, 1795.

Brown, a New Yorker, built a three-story frame hotel in 1857, 24x40, where the old bank building stands now. On this investment he went broke. Traded a gold watch to S. T. Leaming, which cost him $100, for a horse, and went to Denver, Colorado. Jumped a claim, part of the townsite, and held it. It was one of those lucky moves which makes a man rich in a day. Brown built the famous Brown Palace

of Denver City, a structure that cost over $1,000,000. His Decatur property was purchased by A. B. Fuller. On May 1, 1876, the hotel was destroyed by fire; cause, a defective chimney.

George W. Mason, one of the incorporators and a native of New York, came to Decatur in the spring of 1856. Was a legal advisor and secretary of the Decatur Townsite and Ferry Company, and a wide-awake lawyer who had the interest of the village at heart. His health was not good and he was troubled with the asthma. Homesteaded the farm that Frank J. Griffin lives on now. Went to Virginia and died Built the dwelling which Thos. R. Ashley and family reside in.

Steven Decatur Bross, better known as Commodore Decatur, came to the town which was named in his honor, from Bellevue, at which place a clerk in the trading post of Col. Peter A. Sarpy. Followed the Omahas who moved up that year, and located on a farm now known as the Decatur Springs place, the property of James Ashley. The Commodore built a sod and frame house and temporarily resided here. Married a widow lady, Mrs. Thomas of Council Bluffs, who had three children—Abbie, Waldo, and Lizzie. Decatur entered the mercantile business before the incorporation act and made lots of money in his traffic

Brown Hotel, bullt in 1857, destroyed by fire in 1875.

with the Indians, who at that time were drawing large annuities. Was a portly, erect, fine looking man, and quite a favorite with the ladies. Courteous and graceful in his speech and movements, he won the confidence of the town and made friends wherever he went. For some reason which has never been disclosed he dropped his name Bross. Governor Bross, editor and proprietor of the Chicago Tribune, was a brother of his; also Colonel Bross of the Board of Trade Battery of Chicago. Decatur went from here to Colorado and was a representative from that state in 1876 to the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia. He died in Colorado and his widow lives in San Diego, California, with her daughter, Mrs. Abbie Stevens, whose husband at one time in the early 60's, was a merchant of Decatur. The Commodore was a peculiar gentleman; very eccentric, and yet in spite of his oddity a good neighbor and regarded all law-abiding men as equals. Was a clerk in Sarpy's trading post at Decatur a few months.

Hank D. Cline was one of the early settlers after the incorporation of the town. A native of Pennsylvania, and after remaining here a few years, returned to his home, and now lives in the city of Philadelphia. Hank built the dwelling that James Dillon and family now occupy; was a carpenter by trade and took

the contract for the Henry Fontenelle residence; Ed. Canfield and Lorenzo Hobbs assisting him in the work; and Jacob Snyder, who now lives west of town on the Blackbird Creek near the reservation line, was the man who put on the plaster and built the chimneys. Material for the dwelling, frame and finishing stuff was hauled up from Omaha and cost something over $2,000. Finest piece of residence property at that time for miles around. Fontenelle was then Government interpreter for the Omahas, commanding a large salary, and could well afford to erect such a handsome home.

Jones of New York State, better known as "Farmer Jones," located here in 1857; boarded at the Brown Hotel, then under the management of Mr. Sidmore. Pre-empted 160 acres just over the west line of the town, now in possession of F. E. McNutt; was a man of means with a polished education and came on the strength of a report that a railroad would be built to town. After a few years of patient waiting he left in disgust, and now resides in Lafayette, Indiana.

Matthew C. Wilber and his wife were among the first arrivals in the spring of 1856. Mrs. Wilber taught school in a little town north of Onawa, which later was consumed by the incorporation of Whiting. Matt was interested in horses; conducted a rough and

ready livery stable. Mrs. Wilber resigned her position as school teacher, and assisted her husband in the management of the Turn Around Tavern. Went from here to Omaha and invested in a livery barn. Mr. Wilber died in that city in 1890; and his wife followed him two years afterward.

Dr. Thomas H. Whitacre, a physician by profession, educated for a civil engineer and a native of New York, located here in 1855; one of the incorporators and employed by the Townsite and Ferry Company to draft a plat and survey the town. Practiced medicine here and throughout the country; population at that time very limited, and the first doctor to hang out his shingle in Decatur. Dr. Low followed him shortly afterward in the practice. Mr. Whitacre was a man full of energy and ambition and it was largely through his instrumentality that the organization of the Decatur Townsite and Ferry Company took place. Elected several terms as village recorder and councilman. After the rainbow of hope which had radiated its bright colors of future promise on the railroad map of Decatur for so long at last faded away into the gloom of eternal despair, the doctor went back to his Ohio home and a few years later died. The handful of old settlers who still live and knew him, revere the memory of Thomas H. Whitacre as a man

whose character was above reproach. When a resident of Decatur he lived where the James Neary family do now and was the builder of that house.

Paul Dominick was an old Frenchman; born at Jefferson Barracks, and came to Decatur, or rather the settlement, in the summer of 1855. Located on a claim what is now known as the "Colonel Paul Place." Blacksmith by trade and erected a shop on his farm. Killed himself one rainy morning, while preparing to go to Pike's Peak.

William Gaylord, an easterner, became a resident in 1857; a carpenter by trade, and built the Page dwelling, better known as the Heath House. Also a contractor; went from here to Omaha and died there.

Lucien Fontenelle was born in 1803 at a small settlement called Burat in the southern part of the State of Louisiana. When but 14 years old a clerk in a New Orleans banking house. Was of royal descent, and his parents perished in a hurricane when he was a baby, at the town of his birth. When this sad incident occurred, Lucien and his sister Amelia were under the care of an aunt, Madam Merlier, of the City of New Orleans. It was the hand of fate that saved him. The parents left their children a large estate and they were placed under the care of their aunt, Mrs. Merlier. She was a cruel, haughty woman, and

one day in a fit of passion she struck Lucien. This wounded the boy's independence and pride and he ran away from home. Went to the northwest, coming most of the way with Major Pilcher of the United States army. Fontenelle was employed by the American Fur Company; crossed the Rockies to the Pacific coast; conducted a trader's post at Fort Laramie, assisted by a Mr. Dripps; married an Omaha Indian woman, and the latter part of his life lived in Bellevue, where he died and was buried. Fontenelle was a typical frontiersman; generous to a fault, and true to his friends. There were five children, Albert, Tecumseh, Logan, Henry, and Susan. Henry came from Bellevue to Decatur with the Omahas in the summer of 1854. Locatetd on the north side of Wood Creek, next to the river, where he lived until he died, Wednesday morning, March 26, 1899.

Henry Fontenelle was born at Fort Laramie, August 20, 1831. Educated under the direction of Father De Smit, the historical Catholic missionary; and apprenticed himself to the wheelwright trade in Kansas City. In an early day near Decatur conducted a large merchandise store and made lots of money. C. C. Dunn, now of Blair, clerked for him several years. Mr. Fontenelle took an active part in the organization of Thurston County. Married Miss Emily Pappan,

of St. Louis, at Bellevue, on the 28th day of February, 1855. To them were born the following children: Lucien A., March 9, 1856; Eugene, July 21, 1858; Victoria, September 2, 1860; Raymond, February 27, 1862; Emily, November 15, 1864; Emma, February 15, 1869; Ella, October 16, 1870; and Nattie, October 16, 1876. All are dead but Eugene and Raymond. Eugene married Miss May Otteson of Decatur at Pender, March 16, 1899; ceremony performed by Judge Curry.

Lorenzo Hobbs and family of Massachusetts located here in the latter part of the 50's. Contractor, and built the house which is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Griffin. First used as a hotel. Pre-empted 40 acres of land joining the town on the east. Moved to Omaha where his wife died. Re-married and now lives in Montana. Will, his eldest son, has been Sheriff of Siskiyou County, California, for years. Henry, another son, resides in Bancroft, a well-to-do merchant. In 1881 the building now occupied by John T. Choyce was built for Hobbs, by A. B. Fuller, to use as a general merchandise store.

Clement Lambert was born near the City of St. Louis, October 2, 1807. When a boy he ran away from home to join the expedition of Gen. Fremont, who succeeded in determining much of the typography

of this western country. Lambert was an employe of the American Fur Company. Came to Decatur from Bellevue with Peter A. Sarpy in the summer of 1854. Both of them established a trading post here. Engleman, an old soldier of the Mexican war, in the United States service, clerking for Sarpy at his Bellevue store, came up that year and took charge of the post at this place. Engleman also receives a pension of $12 a month and was postmaster of the settlement. Mr. Lambert was a resident of Decatur until the day of his death, March 5, 1879. In 1867 his sister moved to Omaha from her St. Louis home. She was an invalid; her complaint rheumatism, and as a relief used coal oil, applying it externally. It will never be known just how it happened, but the house caught fire and she was burnt to death.

Mr. Jones, the man who came here with Charley Porter, was of a high family, and all of his people well connected. A. Jones, a brother, at one time was the editor and proprietor of one of the leading papers of New York City; John Jones, another brother, was chief clerk in the Omaha postoffice in an early day. His daughter, Mary, married Dr. Sherlls, pastor of the Omaha Congregational Church. Jones went west from here; invested his money in mining stock, and lost everything he had. Became estranged from his

family and then went back to the old home in New York City. Captain Leaming met him in Chicago a number of years ago and he was then reporting for one of the dailies. Jones was despondent and melancholy. Leaming, without permission, telegraphed his family in New York City; they came out and it was a happy reunion. Mr. Jones went back with them.

Michael Calnon and his wife, Bridget Haley, were natives of Ireland. To them have been born: Thadeus B., Mary Pauline, John A, James, William G., Lewis F., Thomas E., and George M. Mr. Calnon, by occupation, was a farmer; religion, Catholic; politics, a democrat. From Ireland came to Canada, then to Illinois and worked in the lead mines; took a preemption near Omaha in 1855; drove off by land sharks at the point of a pistol. At another time with his hands tied behind him, a party of masked men took him to the river, and at the end of a rope ducked him in the Missouri, threatening to drown Mr. Calnon if he did not withdraw all claims and title to his homestead. Refused to concede to their demands; the rope slipped and he was pulled out a little farther down the stream, about twenty feet from the shore, with a long pole, by a couple of friends. Some of the perpetrators of this outrage are now prominent citizens of Omaha. For his wife's sake, Mr. Calnon abandoned

the claim and moved to Decatur in 1857. He was not the only man who was molested and tormented in his rights by the infamous outlawry of these rogues. Calnon homesteaded 160 acres near Decatur, and died here; Dr. Whitacre attended the sick bed. He was buried up on the hill. All the children are Burt County residents; prosperous farmers and business men.

Thomas Foley, an Irishman, came from the east with Brackett and Blackstone, and had two sons, James and John. A bricklayer and stonemason by trade; homesteaded 160 acres west of town and deeded it to his son James, who sold it to Maryott & McHirron. James went from there to Blair and engaged in the cattle business with a man named Chittenden; now has a commission office in South Omaha. John went to California. Tom went from here to Blair to live with his son and died there. While residents of Decatur the Foleys lived in a small frame house which stood in the rear of where the Chapin & Son drug store is now. Time has obliterated it from the present, and a few years ago it fell, a victim of decay and hard usage. The first Catholic mass read in Decatur was at Mr. Foley's home by Father Ryan of St. John's, Nebraska, in 1862.

Frank Welch was an eastern boy and a civil en-

gineer by profession; came here in 1856, and the first postmaster of Decatur proper. Afterwards represented the people of this district as congressman in the legislative halls at Washington. Owned a half interest in the merchandise firm of Stevens & Welch; the former gentleman the son-in-law of Commodore Decatur. Frank dropped dead while attending a convention at West Point several years ago. He was a member of the House at the time and Congress adjourned a day as a mark of respect. His obituary was put upon the records and a number of memorial speeches delivered by noted associates. Was a member of the council, and village recorder for several years. He was very popular among Decatur people and liked by all who knew him. His birthplace was Boston, Massachusetts.

The following list concludes Decatur's earliest settlers: George W. Doane, first lawyer; his office, the little building where Daniel Morley keeps his coffins; his partner, David L. Collier; came here in 1857. Christopher C. Dunn, an expert machinist from Chicago, 1857. John Chase, from Bellevue, trader, 1855; village treasurer, 1858. S. T. Preston, plasterer; Adam Kerns, saw mill man; John Leonard, machinist; Mike Evans, general work; Charles Goodell, carpenter; S. T. Young, farmer; A. B. Fuller, hotel man,

contractor and builder; E. D. Canfield, carpenter and contractor. Harry Owens, general work, and later farmer. During the winter of 1857 and the deep snow, Mr. Owens went to Onawa on horseback, for the mail, and was paid $10 for the trip. He was the only man who could wade the snow, on account of his height.

The dissolution of the Decatur Townsite and Ferry Company was gradual. New faces appeared; families came, bought lots and built homes. The stock exhausted itself in the demands of fresh arrivals, and in the fall of 1857 there was a total assimilation by the tissues of a growing public. The first village election by the people was on January 14th, 1857, and the following is a copy of the meeting of the initiatory council:

Opening session of the Decatur City Common Council, held February 8, 1858. Met at the house of S. B. Griswald, all of the aldermen present, and the mayor in the chair. The meeting was called to order by the mayor, and the following certificates were produced for record: For mayor, Silas T. Leaming; aldermen, Jacob Snyder, and D. B. Gaylord; all duly signed by the deputy county clerk. On motion of S. T. Leaming moved that W. W. Wilson of this city be appointed city attorney. Said W. W. Wilson was duly

elected and the recorder instructed to inform him of said election. On motion of the mayor the recorder was instructed to inform the city attorney that he should draw up a set of city ordinances. On motion of the mayor adjourned. Frank Welch, Recorder.

Following is a copy of the certificate of election of Captain S T. Leaming, the first mayor of Decatur:

(Filed February 8th, 1858.) I, I. R. Hyde, Deputy Clerk in and for the County of Burt, N. T., do hereby certify that an election held in the City of Decatur, on the 14th day of January, 1858, Silas T. Leaming was duly elected mayor of said city. Given under my hand this 15th day of January, 1858. I. R. Hyde, Deputy County Clerk.

At a meeting of the council a short time afterwards, the following ordinances were voted upon and accepted: Ordinance No 1, "To provide for the meeting of the city council"; No. 2, "To regulate official bonds"; No. 3, "Regulating official fees"; No. 4, "To define the duties of the recorder"; No. 5, "To provide for the granting of a license to sell intoxicating liquors."

Following is a copy of the journal of the town council held in the town office, Monday, June 4, 1860: Mayor Hobbs in the chair. Aldermen present: Stevens, Leaming and Kearns. Leaming presented his

bond which was accepted, as alderman. T. H. Whitacre's bond was presented by C. F. Porter as recorder, which was accepted. By request of S. T. Leaming the minutes of the last meeting were read and laid on the table until the next meeting. On motion adjourned until June 11. Thos. H. Whitacre, Recorder.

Following is a copy of the journal of the town council held at Mr. Hobbs' home, June 2, 1860: Present Aldermen Evans and Dunn; Mayor Hobbs in the chair. Minutes of last meeting read and approved. The poll list of the annual charter election was read, of which the following is a copy: May 7th, 1860, at an election held in Decatur, Burt County, N. T., the whole number of votes cast was twenty-four, (24), and the following persons secured the respective number of votes opposite their names for the different respective offices:

M. Evans, for Mayor..... 12
C. F. Porter for Mayor..... 12
L. Hobbs, for Councilman..... 10
C. Dunn, for Councilman..... 10
F. Welch, for Councilman..... 10
A. Kerns, for Councilman..... 15
A. Higley, for Councilman..... 10
S. T. Leaming, for Councilman.... 13

A. B. Fuller, for Councilman..... 2
Thos. H. Whitacre, for Recorder... 17
J. S. Ramseyer, for Recorder..... 7
F. H. Stevens, for Treasurer..... 10
C. Engleman, for Treasurer..... 14
J. E. Wilson, for Assessor..... 1
A. B. Fuller, for Assessor..... 9
J. Dalrymple, for Assessor..... 12
T. C. Goodell, Marshal..... 11
Wm. Point, Marshal..... 12

Judges of election: H. B. Gaylord, S. T. Leaming, and Adam Kerns. Clerk of election: Thos. H. Whitacre and J. E. Dowley.

Officers elected: Aldermen: Kerns and Leaming. Recorder: T. H. Whitacre. Treasurer: C. Engleman. Assessor: J. Dalrymple. William Point, Marshal.

On motion of Mr. Evans the mayor was ordered to give notice for an election to be held in the town of Decatur, on the first Monday of July next to elect a mayor and one alderman. Motion carried. On motion adjourned to Monday night next, the regular monthly meeting. Chas. F. Porter, Recorder.

Following is the copy of an election held in the village of Decatur, N. T., on the 5th day of May, 1862:

Chas. F. Porter, for Mayor..... 16

C. Lambert, Alderman..... 1
F. H. Stevens, Alderman..... 13
T. J. Laughlin, Alderman..... 12
S. T. Leaming, Alderman..... 7
S. Decatur, Alderman..... 1
Thos. H. Whitacre, Recorder..... 14
Frank Welch, Recorder..... 1
Adam Kerns, Treasurer..... 13
Lorenzo Hobbs, Treasurer..... 1
A. B. Fuller, Assessor..... 12
Hiram Higley, Assessor..... 1
J. I. Ogg, Marshal..... 12

The land claim clubs of '56 and '57 of this country were bold in their criminal actions, resorting to many deeds of outlawry and respecting nothing but the force of arms emanating to their own vicious and selfish ends. In their assertion of right of possession to certain claims atrocious acts were committed, to gain title to lands which in the eyes of the law—should a court of justice have intervened—rightfully belonged to the honest and well-meaning homesteader. A few of the outrages perpetrated by these lawless organizations may be recorded as follows:

The State Historical Society says: That the club of Omaha in '56 took Michael Calnon to the Missouri, River, and after cutting a hole large enough,

ducked him in the chilly waters until he was almost drowned and frozen and then escorted him to the United States land office by the subtle persuasion of a loaded pistol pointed at his head and compelled to give up the claim which was rightfully his by the law of the land.

Dr. Henry of Omaha and another man had a dispute about a claim near Bellevue. Dr. Henry's gun very mysteriously exploded and his comrade fell dead at his feet. At the time of the accident the doctor and the adverse claimant were engaged in friendly chat; and also making overtures to settle the dispute by dividing the claim—which both finally agreed to do. The accidental and deplorable death of the doctor's neighbor during the conversation gave Mr. Henry complete and absolute possession, thanks to the unexpected arrival of an amiable arbitrator—the doctor's exploded fire-arm.

In those days every townsite along the Missouri River was under the control of some some land claim club and the man who came to homestead a piece of land was compelled to go five or six miles beyond the line of these so-called townsites. A captain of a steamboat pulling up the river observed a settler on the banks and shouted to him: "Hello, there. What's the name of your town?" The settler replied in a

loud voice: "This haint no town. I'm tryin' to farm here." "Good," yelled back the captain, waiving his arms and apparently highly delighted. "Come abroad and get a drink; you're the first farmer I've ever seen in Nebraska Territory."

This is a fair illustration going to show the scarcity of farmers and the abundance of land sharks in those rough and tumble times.

After the financial crash of '57, when the wildcat banks went broke, few of the townsites were of any value except for farming land. Many people had lost or spent what ready money they brought with them to the Territory, and in '58 a silver quarter looked to them as big as a cart wheel. It was then the claim clubs went to the wall.

Perhaps one of the best-known men in Middle Nebraska in the early 60's was Jack Morrow, whose ranch was near Cottonwood Springs, a few miles west of Fort Kearney. Jack was a fine-looking fellow, generous hearted, but full of dissolute habits. One of his principal occupations was trading travelers good oxen for sore-footed ones, always getting a nice little bunch of money to boot; and also had the faculty of knowing where stolen horses could be found, a gift which almost cost him his life. In those days the luxuriant grasses of the valleys grew to a

height of ten to fourteen feet, and the friendly settlements many long and weary miles apart. Near Fort Kearney was the home of the Cheyenne Indians and they were ever on the alert to steal ponies and attack the smallest of emigrant trains. One evening a party of gold seekers put up at Jack's for the night and the courteous landlord made them feel very much to home. The next morning when the boys went out to hitch up to proceed on their journey their ponies were discovered missing. Morrow taking in the situation at a glance and turning around addressed the leader, a brawny, determined-looking fellow: "Say, mister, you give me $25 and I will have your horses back here in two hours." The traveler looked at Jack for a moment and then grabbed him by the throat, and poking a pistol under his nose said: "Stranger, I don't know whether you're a horse thief or not, but if those ponies ain't back here in two hours, me and my crowd are going to have a little neck-tie party and you'll be the man that works one end of it. Morrow's hands and feet were tied and it was then he saw the hopelessness of the case. Despatching a half-breed boy that lived with him out to the Cheyenne's camp, the ponies were returned to Cottonwood Springs in less than two hours. Jack was a great Indian man, and while perhaps not the real culprit, knew who the

guilty parties were; told the strangers they were gentlemen and thanked them for sparing his life. Morrow made a fortune on his ranch and died a few years ago.

CHAPTER FOUR.

THE JAMES FAMILY—NEBRASKA INDIAN SCARE—ORGANIZATION OF MASONIC LODGE—PROGRESS OF DECATUR — HISTORY OF HER SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES—DROWNING OF OWENS, BLAKE, MANSFIELD, AND OTHERS—ROBT. MOORE AND THE RISE AND FALL OF TIEVILLE—ROMANCE OF KIT CARSON—MURDER OF FRENCH DESPERADO BY THE INDIANS—SILVER CREEK'S OLD NAME.

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This paragraph introduces an exception in the history of the old town, a character well known to the people of the West and the United States; mother of Frank and Jesse James, famous and successful bandits and outlaws, natives of the State of Missouri. Mrs. Samuels taught one term of school in the village at the town hall in the year of 1862. Her second husband was a doctor and of late years resided on a well-improved farm in Clay County, near Kearney, State of Missouri, not far from the old stamping grounds of her renegade sons. During this lady's stay in Decatur she established for herself a circle of warm friends, but some of her pupils were deathly afraid of her, and an incident is told of how she drove

a mischievous boy from the school room with a broom stick. Mrs. Samuels was a portly woman and reputed as a person of impulsive qualities, but cool-headed in a crisis, and really a brave woman.

Upon return to her old home near Kearney during the progress of the civil war, a bomb was thrown through a window of her house, crashing the glass and landing on the floor in the center of the room, where it exploded with terrific force. One of Mrs. Samuel's arms was torn from her shoulder by the flying pieces and her infant baby killed. This cruel and blood-thirsty act was perpetrated by the villianous Quantrell and his rebel outlaws, venting their terrible spleen upon an innocent mother and child, for the spite and hatred they held for her sons, Jesse and Frank; and it was only a short time prior to this outrage that these same men waylaid and murdered Mr. James, an honest and industrious farmer, respected by his neighbors. The latter atrocious act was what incited Frank and Jesse to become outlaws; and over the dead body of their murdered father they registered an oath in heaven that neither would rest until the last member of Quantrell's band bit the dust of death with their boots on. This pledge was carried out to the letter and the boys' revenge complete, for the James brothers hounded the Quantrells to the grave,

not one escaping the vendetti and to the last surviving member, fell a victim to the oath sworn on their heads by Jesse and Frank. Mrs. Samuels died in the fall of 1900 in Kansas City at the home of her grandson, Jesse James, a successful tobacco merchant of that city.

In an hour of peril and danger the mother never forsook her sons and one time when the officers of the law came to arrest Jesse she hid him under her skirts. Another time when the officers were forcing an entrance, Mrs. Samuels met them at the door, knocked the foremost down with her fist, and gave her son the signal. Jesse heard it and going to the back door disposed of the fellow there in a manner peculiar to himself and made his escape.

Jesse was killed by Bob Ford at St. Joe at his home while he was standing on a chair dusting a picture. The outlaw's pistols lay on the bed, thus placing himself at the mercy of his murderer. It is said that Jesse contemplated killing Bob and Charlie Ford at the time of his death. He suspicioned them of treachery. It is strange, too, that in a few years after, Charlie Ford was killed and Bob committed suicide.

Dr. Whittier of Decatur had in his possession for a long time a note against the rebel bandit Quantrell; the amount, $4. It was a present to him from a friend,

Capt. J. D. Conner, of Decatur county, Kansas. The note was outlawed when the doctor got possession of it and only retained it as a keepsake. The note was given to Connor by Quantrell for a pair of pants, he living then on an adjoining farm and known and respected by his neighbors as a model young man.

The first Indian scare of any importance to occur in Northeastern Nebraska took place in 1858. The report came down the river, brought by a man, in a small boat, headed for St. Louis. He spread the news in Decatur settlement that the Sioux were on the war-path and even then on their way from the north, their course of destruction following the settlements bordering the Missouri river, pilfering and burning everything before them, and murdering helpless families. The alarming report created a panic. Women fainted and strong men turned pale. A host of people all over the country sold out at a sacrifice and returned to their eastern homes, many of them not waiting to sell, but immediately forsaking their homes and farms, fleeing to settlements on the south and in Iowa for protection, under the impulse of fright. But like many other fables which have started without a foundation and told for the truth, it was only an empty rumor, and dissolved itself from the minds of the people almost in a single day. When the truth became known, de-

serters returned and new ones followed along, and then once more the affrighted settlements grew and thrived.

Decatur did have one genuine Indian scare, however, which almost culminated seriously. It happened along close to the occurrence of the one just mentioned. Some of the post traders had been dealing out liquors to the Omahas. Under the influence the Indians committed all kinds of depredations as well as frightening and threatening the white women, until virtue ceased to be a reward and their acts intolerable. A vigilance committee waited on the guilty traders and notified them if they persisted in this illegal traffic, a sentence of death would be imposed on them, but if they ceased their nefarious business would be allowed to go in peace. This effective step by the citizens established peace, and for many years afterwards a drunken Indian in Decatur would have been a novel sight. Before the trouble was squashed the settlement was "wild and wooly" and fights came off regular every thirty minutes in the day as well as the night. A killing was a common occurrence, but when the Indians threatened to go on the warpath, and came to town decorated in fancy feathers and bright colors—then the settlers interfered, restoring order out of this wild chaos, caused by a reckless indulgence in fire-water.

Hon. Thomas R. Ashley, Pioneer
Schoolboy of Nebraska.

In 1861 a compensation was granted by George Armstrong, Grand Master of Nebraska, for the formation of a lodge in Decatur; and in the following year, the Grand Lodge of Nebraska granted a charter and Decatur Lodge No. 7, A. F. and A. M., was constituted with the following officers: O. H. Irish, W. M.; Chas. F. Porter, W. S.; B. R. Folsom, J. W.; John S. Ramsey, secretary; Wm. A. Amsbury, S. D.; Lorenzo Hobbs, J. D., and E. D. Canfield, Tiler. This lodge continued its organization until 1874, when it surrendered its charter, many of the members after the dissolution joining at Tekamah. On the 17th of September, 1881, a dispensation was granted W. J. Outhwaite, R. W. Reynolds, L. D. Hoppock, James Ashley, M. J. Kenyon, Franklin Goodell, H. C. McHirron, James Littel, and R. G. Langley to organize as a lodge, and on the 20th day of June, 1882, Star Lodge No. 88 received its charter. On the 1st day of August, 1891, the lodge room and its furniture was destroyed by fire. It is now located in a cozy hall over C. B. Barlow's merchandise store, and in good working order.

The first term of public school taught in Decatur was a winter term, beginning in the fall of 1861, Mrs. E. D. Canfield, teacher, in the town hall. Pupils: T. R. Ashley, Lizzie Lambert, Will Hobbs, Gertie Fuller,

Beattie Hobbs, James Calnon, Tim Calnon, Lizzie Thompson and Albert Cline.

Mrs. Alice Perry followed Mrs. Canfield, succeeded by Mrs. Samuels; then Miss Shaw, to Miss Hamilton, followed by M. McCrady, Mrs. Decatur, Mr. Masters, Miss Welch and Miss Washburn.

Then the town hall was abandoned and the perpetuation of the school continued in a little building back of the parish residence. The following teachers successively taught here: Miss Benjamin, W. E. Drury, Miss Laughlin, Mr. Morrison, Miss Whitcomb, Miss Dakin, Mr. Monk, Mr. Dutton, and Dr. Wm. B. Gregg. In 1874 the present brick building was erected, since which time the schools have steadily increased, until the enrollment has passed the three hundred mark. Since the progress of educational work in this latter school building, the following instructors have successively been in charge: Prof. Secord, Mrs. Jackson; Professors Lake, Graves, Towel, Sears, Atkinson, Hadley, Kitts, Fowler, Smith, Quinn, Frazier, Mr. E. G. Smith and Prof. Hanson. It was through the efforts of B. B. Smith that a library was placed in the school, and many good books have been added to the collection by private donations. The schools are now doing twelfth grade work and the pupils having completed the course of study can enter the Uni-

versity of Nebraska without an examination. High School graduates as follows: Class of 1891, Mary L. Y. Deen and Phoebe E. Leaming. Class of 1893, Lucy Leaming, Stanton Wilder, George F. Morley, and Wm. I. Langley. Class of 1894, Ida Stanton, Howard Long, and Jesse E. Himler (dead.) Class of 1896, Flora Calnon and Mason Darling. Class of 1897, Edward Wilder, James R. Wilder, Jason B. White, and William R. Eagleton. Class of 1898, Edith F. Gantz, Jesse P. Lake, and Lewis W. Page. Class of 1899, Shannon Gatewood, Mable A. Ashley, Ralph Langley, and Lizzie White. Decatur has the finest school library in Burt county. Its course of studies are high, modern, including branches in science, and the rapid strides and advancement accomplished in educational fields have far exceeded the expectations of its patrons and the board of education. As a graded school it is second to none in the county and as good as any in the state.

The first white man known to have met his death by drowning near Decatur was Thomas Owens, a brother of Mont Owens, in the summer of 1862, at the mouth of Wood Creek, in the Missouri River, and the supposition is, he was a victim of water cramps. Tom called for help, but it was too late to render any assistance. A number of boys, among the crowd James

Calnon, also in bathing, attempted a rescue, but Owens went down for the last time before they could reach him. The body was never recovered.

Wilts Mansfield met a similar fate in 1871. He and Frank Kelso were swimming from a sand bar in the center of the river, opposite Decatur, to the Nebraska bank. The boys made the shore all right and started back after a short rest, but missed the point of the bar which they had headed for and wore their strength out against a strong current. The boys were too tired to retrace their course and trusted in getting by the swift water, in which successful, would have put them within a few feet of the bar. When at last the fearful predicament was realized that the sand bar could never be reached, and that they were too tired to go back, they called for help. A rescue party responded to the appeal, and when within a few feet of the struggling swimmers, Mansfield sank from exhaustion. Kelso was saved and now lives in Oregon, and doing well. Wilts Mansfield was a favorite among our townspeople and is spoken of by those who knew him as a bright, gentlemanly young fellow. His body was found about four miles below here on the river's edge, and interred in the Decatur cemetery.

On April 3, 1870, David Hart, William Fitser, and Elmer Blake became victims of the treacherous Mis-

souri. Blake, working for F. D. Wilson, on the other side of the river, came over after the other two men. It was a windy day and the waves were high. The crossing was attempted just below Decatur and the boys had got about half way over when the boat tipped bottom side up. This did not discourage them, however, and they all climbed on top. The boat tipped again, and this time only two men climbed on. Another revolution of the boat and only one man appeared; a little farther down the river the skiff rolled again, and this time anxious watchers from the river banks could discern nothing. The human freight was unloaded and an empty hull rode the rough bosom of a passive stream to an involuntary destination.

In the early summer of 1874, while crossing the river, Nelson Oakley was tipped out of a boat; how, was never known, and drowned while swimming to shore. He passed the ferry boat which had just started for the Iowa side. Sam Smith, an employe, called out if he could make it, and Oakley looking back over his shoulder laughed, made a reply, and went down. Sam jumped, but it was too late—Oakley was never seen again.

In the summer of 1895, Charlie Philips, a Decatur boy about 16 years old, lost his life by drowning, near the mouth of Wood Creek. He was bathing with a

host of youthful companions, got beyond his depth, and went down. The body was recovered by Lafe Cronk, the search for Phillips lasting about half an hour. Dr. Ross attempted a resurrection, but the effort was fruitless. The remains were interred in the Decatur cemetery.

The Episcopal Chapel of Decatur was built in 1862, and the first church of that denomination erected in the diocese and the state. Rev. Batt was the pastor, and remained here about two years, boarding with Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ashley. He was a married man. The membership while not large is an earnest and energetic one, and a gradual increase has been manifested on the enrollment record for the past three years. The members of this church recently built a new church, design from Chicago architect; cost, about $1,200.

In 1861, Mr. and Mrs. Robt. Ashley moved down from Dakota City, and their first notable work shortly after their arrival was the organization of a Methodist Sunday School. Previous to this time, Rev. Asbury of Dakota City came down every two weeks and held services. The growth of the Methodist Church has been rapid and very prolific, and its enrollment of membership the largest of any denomination in the village. In the summer of 1889 the present hand-

some edifice was erected, costing $1,767.81—private donations and by those interested in church organization.

The Presbyterian Church, which was abandoned in 1888, was built in the year of 1871, through the instrumentality of Dr. John M. Peebles, a residing Presbyterian minister of Decatur. In 1870 he attended the General Assembly at Baltimore, Maryland, and received at this religion conventicle a contribution of $500 for a church at Decatur and Lyons. On his way home he purchased the lumber for both churches at Chicago. A number of private donations were presented, and Mr. Wm. Thaw, of Philadelphia, was a liberal contributor. In the fall of 1871 a public supper was given for the church, the proceeds to go toward paying for the plastering of the church. Dr. Peebles was its pastor for ten years and then resigned on account of his health. Dr. Sloan succeeded him, followed by Rev. Griswall—one year each. Rev. William Hamilton also occupied the pulpit one year.

The German Baptist Church was built in the fall of 1893, costing $800, and the money secured by local private donations. Rev. Galib Light is the resident minister; his home on a farm eight miles west and south of town. The membership is limited, but solid, and devotional services are held about once a month.

The Catholic Church, standing where it does today, was moved there in 1880, from the river bank, and previous to the purchase was built by a Sioux City company for a warehouse. The money which purchased the building was willed to the Catholics of this community by John Henry, an old soldier, better known as "Johnny Smoker." He took as a homestead the farm where John Eddy Coneally lives now, and sold it to him. There was a $700 payment due on the place and Henry made a will in favor of the Catholics, appointing C. C. Dunn administrator. Was thrown from a horse and the injuries received killed him. The parish priest is Father Crowley, his residence Bancroft, and the members are principally out-of-town people.

One of the most prominent events of the year of 1864, was the birth of a little town, over the river, where Hardy's farm is now, called Tieville. It was a wood-choppers' settlement, consisting of about 250 inhabitants, no stores, and a postoffice. The man who established it was Robt. Moore, an Irishman, from Boston, Mass., and through the influence of his wife's relatives, awarded the contract for furnishing ties for the Union Pacific railroad, to be delivered at Omaha. The first move Moore made was the purchase of 320 acres of Monona county timber land bordering the

river, and the next to employ all the men he could to cut it. The continuation of his contract lasted for three successive years, '65, '66, and '67. Moore became immensely wealthy and after the close of his business in Iowa resided in Decatur. Went to New-hampshire in the summer of 1878, and now has a handsome home on the sea coast. He left his lumber business in the hands of Al. Abbot, now of Pender; and W. S. Page closed out his real estate, the last batch being the townsite of Tieville, sold to Michael Vincent, of Onawa, for $4,000.

In those days it was gay and lively on both sides of the river. In the evenings when the boats came in the Tieville boys and girls would go down and dance on the decks. Captain La Barge of the Emily La Barge, a fine side wheel steamer, carried the most of Moore's stuff to Omaha. This boat also made trips from St. Louis to Fort Benton. A stern wheeler, the Dearlodge, also freighted ties and cordwood to Omaha for Moore. Captain Horn was in charge; its crew, negros. John Lewis, now a resident of Decatur, was one of the supervisors of the loading of these boats. Captain La Barge told him in the summer of '66 for two trips his profits were $150,000; one to Fort Benton, and the other to Berthal, Missouri river towns in North Dakota. The same year, the Cora, a fine stern

wheel steamer, made a run from St. Louis to Fort Benton, going up loaded with a government consignment, and coming back with furs. It is the only boat, with St. Louis as a starting point, that made two trips in one season, going as far as Fort Benton.

Tieville was commonly called "Shanty Town." When Moore left the town left. Its postmaster was David Fiscus, and its school teachers, Mattie and Susan Lewis, the latter now the wife of Geo. J. White, of Decatur. The inhabitants bought their provisions in Decatur and when Moore closed out his tie, lumber and wood business, many of them moved over here Religious meetings were held there occasionally, conducted by James Veil, a Methodist preacher, who afterwards became quite prominent. He was a bright fellow and during the week days worked along with the other boys in the woods, cutting ties and getting out logs. Came down the river in a flat boat from a point in Montana. Jack Lewis has played many a game of cribbage with Veil. He remained in Tieville two years and then went to Dakota. Even the townsite of Tieville is gone now, washed away by the river, and nothing remains to tell the story that once here stood a thriving little village of the sixties.

Kit Carson is one of those veteran pioneers of the West known by all American people and his name

shall forever be venerated. As much as has been said about this beloved man, there still remains a very important romance of him, which up to this time has remained unprinted. In a very early day Carson tired of the wilderness of Iowa, and keen for new adventures, crossed the Missouri and pitched his camp in an Omaha Indian village, situated then where the famous village of Bellevue is now. There was also a small white settlement here, but its numbers were few, yet the men who made it lived afterwards to become immortal characters in the history of Nebraska. There was Lucian Fontenelle, an Indian trader, and in the employ of the North American Fur Company; Peter Sarpy, a clerk for the same company; Stephen Decatur, Clement Lambert, and Mr. Hamilton and Kinney, Presbyterian missionaries. This was in the early '40's, and a white woman was an unknown quantity. When Kit Carson arrived he was hailed with delight and soon became warm friends of the boys, for they were all young men then. One evening when they were gathered around the cheerful fireplace of the log-hut where Fontenelle lived and transacted business, smoking their pipes, Sarpy jokingly remarked: "Kit, why don't you get married?" "Well, to speak the truth, Pete," retorted the young trapper, "I believe I will if I can get Moneta (a young and pretty Indian

girl) to agree with me on a mutual understanding." The boys all laughed good-naturedly at Kit's earnestness, but nothing more was thought of it until a few days later Carson surprised them with the remark, "Well, boys, I was tied up this afternoon and Moneta is the mistress of my tent." The pipe of peace was smoked, of course, and an extra piece of venison cooked for supper that night. Kit was kind to his wife and they appeared to be very happy. Nebraska in those days was a very wild country and a skirmish between two war-like tribes of Indians a frequent occurrence. The Omahas and Sioux were never very friendly, and one pretty fall day when some scouts reported to their chiefs that Dakotahs (the Sioux) were hiding in the neighborhood to steal ponies and kill women and children, it did not surprise any one in camp, and that evening the report was confirmed when the story was told that Fontenelle's wife had killed a Sioux with an ax while he was in the act of sticking a knife in her baby, and that she had wounded another while making his escape through a window covered with a buffalo hide. The attack which must come placed the Omahas in a defenseless position for the most of the warriors were on the Elkhorn valley hunting buffalo and elk. A council was held and Kit volunteered to face the dangers and notify the hunting

party of the imminent peril which threatened to destroy their families and their village. Kissing his wife "good-bye" and mounting his horse he rode away into the wilderness of the north. This was their farewell parting and they never met again. Kit arrived safe in the Elkhorn valley camp, told the Omahas of their danger and then rode away again, following a trail which led toward the mountains of the west. Young Henry Fontenelle, a mere boy, mounted a horse and rode as fast as the animal would carry him for Bellevue to inform the people of the hunting party's return. He rode the horse until it dropped dead and then ran the rest of the way, a distance of sixty miles, and fell fainting at his mother's door. The Sioux delayed their attack too long and the Omahas arrived in time to prevent the massacre and save their property. During Kit's life with his wife there was born to them a boy and a girl, said to be almost as fair as white children. When the Omahas moved to their present home in '54, she and her children came with them, and for her somber and melancholy ways came to be known among her people as "Old Granny." When between the ages of 10 and 12 years the boy and girl took sick and died. A few years afterwards the mother followed and her body was interred on the hill back of the house where Eugene Fontenelle lives

now. Mrs. Fontenelle was present at the funeral and remembers seeing Carson at Bellevue when she was a little girl. This lady says every evening Granny would go forth to the top of a certain favorite high hill and shading her eyes with her hand, look long and earnestly toward the horizon of the west, as if trying to discern some object in the distance. If the woman's heart could have been mirrored perhaps it might have reflected the image of Kit.

How true it is every time a man steps he puts his foot on a human grave. It is scarcely known by anyone that on the gradual incline of the hill near the Burt county poor farm, which sweeps down toward Silver Creek, there lays the dust of a French desperado, who was murdered by the Indians in the infancy of the past century. On the banks of this creek close to the bluffs, many years before the entrance of the white man, the Meha Indians staked their tents and built their fires for the winter, for in those days the great Missouri Bottom teemed with the tramp of the buffalo and the wild chase of the timid deer. The impassive stoic of the prairie was much surprised one evening by the arrival in camp of a pale face, riding in at a furious rate on a spirited mustang. His name was Pineau, and a fugitive from justice. The Indians gave him food and shelter and before the first moon

had gone by he was married into the tribe. The newcomer proved to be cruel and brutal, not only abusing his wife in the most shameful manner, but also all the little children of the village. His atrocious acts became so manifest and intolerable that a council was held and a judgment rendered that he must either leave the village or suffer death. When Pineau heard of this he flew into a furious passion and attacked his interpreter with a knife. White Eagle, one of the chiefs, standing by, gleaning the mad man's foul intentions, raised his war club and struck him a terrific blow over the head. It crushed the man's skull and he fell dead at White Eagle's feet. The Indians named the creek after the Frenchman, and for many years it was known as Pineau River; in those days being a much larger stream of water than it is now.

CHAPTER FIVE.

ANCIENT NEBRASKA—CORONADO'S INVASION AND THE SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD—LOUISIANA TERRITORY—FRANCIS DEROIN IN 1808 AND SARPY'S FIRST APPEARANCE—DELONG' EXPEDITION—INDIAN AGENCY ESTABLISHED AT BELLEVUE—OLD FORT ATKINSON AND THE FAMOUS COUNCIL BLUFFS—EMIGRATION OF THE MORMONS, AND THE BIRTH OF MILLER'S HOLLOW—EARLY DAYS OF OMAHA, AND THE INDIAN WAR.

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Nebraska is an Indian word signifying "white water," and Missouri, the name of the river that brushes our state on its east bank, is also an Indian word, signifying "muddy stream." Beginning with the river and following a westardly course that reaches a central line crossing our country, the typography is principally made up of rolling hills and broad, fertile valleys, but from this point as it gradually inclines farther west, emerges into a huge sand plateau or basin. As an agricultural country, for its splendid capabilities, its eastern portion cannot be surpassed, and the western division could not be better supplied or adapted for successful stock raising. The state is well supplied with water by running streams and on

their banks flourish the walnut, elm, oak, hickory, cottonwood, ash, box elder and a few other varieties of trees. On the bottom lands wild strawberries grow in abundance, and in the gulches and on sheltered hilltops in generous confusion will be found delicious plum fruit, hazlenuts, wild cherry, mulberries and grapes. Flowers grow in reckless profusion and when the season has been favorable oftentimes the broad valleys and wide prairie lands represent a sea of smiling roses. Before the advent of the whiteman buffalos ran at large, also the deer, elk, and many other animals. In the morning could be heard the gobble of the turkey and in the evening the cooing of the wild dove and the timid squacks of ducks and geese. But great changes have taken place and the old has made room for the new, hence the task of presenting this work to the public.

Archaeologists say on dwarfty hills and in certain valleys throughout Nebraska a close observer will discern a peculiar and dim circular indention in the ground, the diameter of which is perhaps 20 to 30 feet. Measuring to a direct center point and digging down, the investigation will disclose a defunct fireplace, broken pieces of pottery and odd eating tools and war implements. These evidences go to show, they say, a race of people not in existence now, inhab-

ited this country prior to the advent of the Indian. Putting this and that together and other connecting links picked up here and there from Old Mexico to Canada, biologists have been led into the belief, a long time ago, a colony of mandarins or Chinese, crossed the isthmus near Alaska and invaded this country for the purpose of making it their home. It may be, too, at one time the two hemispheres were joined together by a narrow strip of land, but through some violent or phenomenal convulsion of the earth, a body of water arose and separated them. Among some of the lost tribes of the races of people are the cliff dwellers and the mound villagers; therefore it is but small wonder, with the facts staring you in the face, Nebraska should represent a mammoth masoleum under whose surface lies at rest races of people that long ago played their parts in the annals of the world.

The marvelous invasions recorded by historians of Spanish cavaliers into this country, highly embellished, when stripped of their finery and exposed in the plain robes of naked truth, are really nothing more than very matter of fact affairs.

Fabulous legends are recorded of "Stephen the Moor," "Coronado the Brilliant," and a few others that have been lauded to the grandest heights of beautiful imagery—all in search of the seven cities of

Cibola and the land of Quivera—tempting the legends which were woven into charming bits of delightful enchantment, and courteously proffered to invaders of the Gulf coast and before the polished courts of Spain. It was told the houses of the seven cities were made of gold and silver and the streets inlaid with precious stones; that there the fountain of life bubbled forth and all who drank thereof would live forever. In an age of superstition it was easy for the people to believe such things, and hundreds of adventurers flocked to America in search of the promised land and the seven cities, which in truth were nothing more than seven very common Indian villages. Foremost among these explorers, who seduced women, murdered innocent men and burned villages that gave to them homage in their long search and march for golden wealth, was Coronado, who discovered the land of Quivera, in the southern portion of Nebraska on the banks of the Platte river, which proved to be nothing more than an ordinary Indian village, for its chief a venerable old Indian, Tartarrax, who greeted the invaders kindly.

Coronado, in a fit of disgust, hanged the man who had acted as his guide in leading him to this place, where he expected to find crosses of gold, crowns set

in precious jewels, and countless wealth; and thus virtually ended the delusive hunt for the mythical cities.

On February 15th, 1764, La Clede's company located on the present site of St. Louis and named the town, and two years afterward Spanish troops took possession in the name of the king. The victorious conquests of Napoleon in Europe against Spain soon caused that country to evacuate, and again the Territory of Louisiana reverted back to the French, and on April 30th, 1803, that great general ceded the territory to the United States, and on October 31st in the same year a temporary government was organized.

By an act of congress, June 14, 1812, the name was changed, calling it "Missouri Territory," providing the vast country with a governor, secretary, council and house of representatives, the judicial power being invested in a superior court, the judges appointed by the president.

1819 Major Long started from Pittsburg in his expedition to the west under orders of John C. Calhoun, secretary of war, the object of the trip to determine the typography of this then unexplored country. Long navigated the Platte, counseled with the Indian tribes, effected treaties of peace, and visited Fort Sage, situated fifty miles below Kansas River, at that time the

last frontier on the settlement going west. Five miles below Council Bluffs, on the Nebraska side of the river, he found Samuel Lisa, manager of a trading post at this point in the interest of the Missouri fur company. Here Long and his party built cabins and wintered one season. Long's daring skill in this expedition was noteworthy and historically important, his investigations covering the greater part of the Missouri Valley and extending to the Rocky mountains. His report to the government was concise and useful, and shortly after his return, Arkansas Territory was created, and on March 2nd, 1821, Missouri admitted as a state.

1822 Wm. H. Ashley, representing the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, ascended the Missouri to the mouth of the Yellowstone, but it proved a disastrous trip, and through accident, deceit, and warring with the Indians, he lost about a fourth of his men, and accomplished but little, besides experiencing other difficulties.

December 30th, 1825, the Kansas Indians ceded a large tract of land to the United States, thus opening new territory for more settlers, and on May 22nd, 1842, John C. Fremont started out from St. Louis, employed by the government, to explore the western country; Kit Carson, the famous trapper and guide,

accompanying him. Fremont's course carried him directly across Nebraska, and his report, now a part of the library of congress, afforded valuable information for an intelligent opening of our state, which was ceded to the United States by the Indians in 1854.

The first permanent settlement in the wilderness of Nebraska occurred on the banks of the Missouri River near where the village of Bellevue now stands—in the form of a frontier trading post, property of the Missouri Fur Company, and in charge of Francis Deroin, a fearless and ambitious Frenchman, about the year 1808. Deroin was succeeded by another Frenchman named Reaubadeux, and in 1824, Peter A. Sarpy was installed as manager. But even prior to this date it has been handed down from records given by Indians, that the white man invaded their country west of the river, but what their names may have been still remains a secret. One year prior to Sarpy's advent, an Indian agency was established at Bellevue, by consent of the government, which was used as a general depot of supplies for trappers, traders, scouts, adventurers, and for the deeper motive of disseminating the principles of peace among the natives and also with a view to the future opening up of that wild and uninhabited territory. This agency was removed from Fort Atkinson, a military post about thirty miles up the river,

representing the site upon which Lewis and Clark made their famous negotiations of peace in the year of 1803 with the Meha Indians—known in history as the "Council Bluffs," a high hill overlooking the Missouri—where they sat in meditation and smoked the pipe of peace with the uncivilized red man. Most of the whitemen in these days intermarried with the natives, as a white woman was an unknown quantity, and among some of these were Sarpy, Deroin, Fontenelle, Kit Carson and Reaubadeux.

In 1846 the Presbyterian Mission Board of New York City secured enough ground for a mission site and thereupon built a rough log school house for the purpose of inculcating into the hearts and minds of the Indian children the principles of education and the ethics of religion. The school was under the supervision of Rev. Ed. McKinney, assisted by Wm. Hamilton, who afterwards became the superintendent. Even before the year of 1844, however, an Indian mission had been erected on Council Creek, a tributary of the Platte, conducted by Rev. Dunbar and Rev. Ellis, both, owing to hostile treatment received at the hands of the Sioux, for safety of their lives, compelled to abandon their religious work, and fled to Bellevue for refuge and protection, and entered into the missionary work at this settlement.

In 1847, the Mormons with Brigham Young as their leader, crossed the Missouri River at Bellevue—penniless and near starvation's door—on their long and weary march to the "new promised land" of the far west. Sarpy crossed them free of charge with his ferryboat, and sustained them through several severe winter months with fuel and provisions. His generosity has not been forgotten, and to this day in certain seclusive camps of the Mormons in Utah, the name of Peter Sarpy is remembered and revered, and they look back upon him as a patron saint sent by God to meet them by the wayside at that time, during their memorable march, to succor and aid them, in that dark hour of dire trouble and sore need.

The first marriage in Bellevue was that of Louis Saunsici, a half breed Omaha, to a Mormon woman, whom he soon deserted for the more effete companionship of an Indian girl with whom he had become enamored. His legal wife, disgusted and discouraged, migrated to Salt Lake City, where she enrolled her wounded and discarded affections to that already long list of the pious and polygamist prophet, Brigham Young.

In 1843 that famous historical and daring explorer, Gen. Fremont, returned from his geographical investigations of the west, stopping over for a few days at

Decatur Bicycle Club of 1898.

Bellevue, where he sold his overland outfit, proceeding to St. Louis by boat down the river.

In 1852, Bellevue was organized and known as the "Old Town Company." In 1854 it was reorganized and in 1856 incorporated, with Reuben Lovejoy as its first mayor. That same year the mission reserve was incorporated, its site a section of land, and the Fontenelle bank opened its doors for a legitimate business.

The year of 1854, J. Sterling Morton, a young reporter from Detroit, arrived in Bellevue, a man with a brilliant mind, that has accomplished much good for Nebraska, and who has filled some of the highest offices in the land. The first Masonic order organized in the Territory was at Bellevue, March, 1854, Nebraska Lodge No. 1, L. B. McKinney, worshipful master.

The first murder trial in Nebraska by procedure of law was that of Dr. Henry for the killing of George Hollister, the court convening in the village of Omaha. Hollister was a young farmer and he and Henry quarreled in regard to the ownership of some land. The slayer was confined to the village blacksmith shop at Bellevue and the deceased accorded a respectable burial. A government steamer arrived during the trouble, its cargo a company of eight soldiers, afflicted with the

cholera. Henry, the only medico in the settlement, was released during the day and at night escorted back to his temporary prison house. On first trial he was convicted, but in the second received his freedom, after which he lived long, and became a useful and prominent citizen.

In 1844, the Mormons settled at Norvoo, Illinois, in large numbers, were expelled from the state, and to seek a new home, migrated west, crossed the Missouri River, and located in what is now Douglas county. The inhabitants aggregated rapidly, and before the year was gone, a population of 15,000 had been acquired. The new comers cut down large tracts of timber for fuel and building purposes, these depredations angering the Indians very much, and complaining to their agent, again the Mormons were expelled and driven away from a new home where they did not expect to be molested. Many of the sect went back east, some down into Missouri but a large band, under the leadership of Miller, an imposing and prominent prophet of this people, went over into the bluffs east of Kanesville, and lost themselves, naming their settlement, "Miller's Hollow," where it is said many strange and mysterious things took place in those days. Here the Mormons built a rude tabernacle, lived in dug-outs and log cabins and tilled the soil,

assuming the right of possession under the title of a "squatter's claim."

In 1851 a spirit of discontent found its way among this seclusive sect, however, and then began their great march to the "new promised land"; and the deserted settlement became a mass of thrifty weeds and rank grasses.

In 1853, a Mr. Brown, Dr. Enos Lowe, Jesse Williams, and Wm. D. Brown of Kanesville, crossed the river in a ferryboat to inspect the present site of the city of Omaha, and favorably impressed, later they organized themselves into a ferry company, purchased a boat, and began business on a limited and cautious scale. The ferry made several successful trips, but in the spring of '55 the high water threw it upon the banks, where it remained—a thing of the past. Mr. Jones, a persevering and an ambitious pioneer, secured the postmastership, carrying the mail in his hat and pockets, but fearful of the responsibilities, shifted the burdens on the shoulders of a Mormon, named Frank, who accepted the commission and kept the mail in a bushel basket. Frank built himself a small house and established his home as the village postoffice.

In spite of the fact that this country had not yet been ceded to the government by the Indians, a small body of men came and squatted on the land, the in-

trusion being objected to strongly by the Indians. The suspense was of short duration, however, and in '55 when the treaty was ratified, a general influx was prevalent, and Omaha's growth rapid and progressive.

Mr. Johnson, one of the brave little settlers before the opening, defiantly represented himself as a merchant, blacksmith, and editor; Seeley, a carpenter; and William Clarncey publicly conducted a grocery. After the passage of the bill admitting Nebraska as a territory, the town was laid out, and Enos Lowe elected president, this gentleman naming the town "Omaha," an Indian word, which means "above the water."

The first and only sermon preached in the year of 1854 was by Rev. Isaac Cooper, from across the river, the service house, a 16-foot room, representing the humble home of Alexander Davis; the congregation numbering less than twenty. There was no collection taken up, "Old Hundred" was sang, and text of the sermon forgotten shortly after it had been announced. An eminent character to arrive in 1855 was Dr. George Miller, a man of intelligence and benevolence, who has lived to become a prominent public character in the history of Nebraska. Dr. Miller was editor of the Herald for many years, and his efforts have always been for the best welfare of the people and his country. A writer in picturing the excitement over the capitol

question says: "The lobbies were once crowded with respective parties to the contest, armed with bludgeons, brickbats and pistols, and a fight was thought to be imminent—but it didn't occur." In another place he says: "Any refractory member opposed to Omaha as the seat of government who refused to be seated when so ordered by the speaker was forcibly notified that if he didn't sit down he would be knocked down, the result of which was usually satisfactory to the speaker." The contestants for the capitol were Florence, Bellevue, Plattsmouth, Nebraska City, and Omaha, the contest representing a very heated controversy, in which wild chaos and intense excitement ran at large. But Omaha was the proud victor and she enjoyed her spoils hugely, until the commonwealth demanded retribution, and plucked the juicy plum to plant it in the fertile soil of Lincoln.

January, 1867, the Northwestern railroad crossed the river on a pile bridge for the first time, to greet the happy and enthusiastic citizens of Omaha. The following month by an act of congress the seat of government was taken away from the city, but the loss did no injury to her growth, for today Omaha is one of the great metropolises of the west. Her population then was about 15,000, now it can be counted very close to half a million.

Perhaps the most atrocious acts committed in pioneer days and which will always leave a dark stain of disgrace upon the bright pages of Nebraska's history were those of the notorious claim clubs of Omaha. The Doc Smith, Calnon, and Murphy affairs can never be covered up, hard as some writers have tried to whitewash these shameful and disgraceful incidents. It is well remembered even by settlers who live yet, how Murphy was almost choked to death and compelled to sign away his right to 160 acres of land; and how Calnon was ducked in the river and then marched to the land office at the point of a pistol, and forced to put his signature to a paper that made him a pauper, and when he moved up in Burt county a short time after, died there from the effects of the bath which he received in the Missouri. Too many witnesses live for these facts to be denied gracefully. The killing of Hollister was another incident, and the cold-blooded murder of an honest man in Covington in 1856. The accounts related here represent but a small part of the depredations committed by these claim clubs.

In the fall of 1864 culminated a spirit of hostilities perpetrated upon the whites by the Cheyennes and the warlike Sioux. It is claimed Major O'Brian, an impertinent officer stationed at Fort McPherson, near Cottonwood Springs, contributed much towards this

outbreak of the Indians, by being very unkind to them, and in their friendly visits to the fort, he would roughly order them away. Profligate white men stole their ponies, disturbed their peaceful hunting camps, and committed other depredations, and the Indians having no recourse, resolved upon war as their only means for redress. The killing of two white men on a ranch in Colorado heralded the beginning of the troubles, their deaths attributed to the Cheyennes, and an attack was made upon their tribe by a posse of cattlemen and settlers, a number of Cheyennes being killed. This only served to sharpen their appetite of hatred for the whites, and from that time on, continuous attacks were made on travellers crossing the plains, stage routes, and small settlements, by the Cheyennes and the Sioux, who were thoroughly hostile now, and eager for the warpath. The first indication of a general outbreak that smacked of a spirit of real war, took place at Plum Creek, August 8th, 1864, when a wagon train was captured and the occupants massacred. Fortunately the telegraph lines were not molested and the fearful news was flashed across the entire country. People from everywhere fled to the forts for protection, but before an organized defense had been prepared, many emigrants and settlers were murdered, women and children as well as men. At Tekamah a

company of twenty-two men was organized with B. R. Folsom as their captain, appointed by Governor Saunders. Similar organizations were effected all over the country, but in spite of this precaution and uniform defense, many innocent people were killed and scalped. In September, 1864, near Cottonwood Springs, a party of laborers at work on a farm adjoining Hinman's place, were surprised and slain; also a squad of soldiers under command of Captain Mitchell, while picking wild plums on the bluffs near the fort, were routed unexpectedly and many of them killed, the attack was so sudden. It is said that Spotted Tail, the famous fighting chief of the Sioux, was the leader of this warring party. As a result of these troubles, which was due to the danger of transportation, the cost of provisions ran up to an enormously high price —meat selling for twenty cents a pound, coffee a dollar, flour ten to twenty dollars a hundred, and hay sold for $40 a ton. The Indian war lasted for five years, during which time much innocent blood was spilled, and in central and western Nebraska untold misery and suffering prevailed. Once a freight train was attacked, captured and burned up, and in order for the occupants to escape they were compelled to run a gauntlet of death.

1867, by invitation, all Indian chiefs who had taken

part in the hostile rebellion, met at North Platte to confer with a United States commission sent out to negotiate with the Indians for a treaty of peace. The chiefs were highly entertained, feasted, ladened with presents, and effusively flattered, and the commissioners went home satisfied the council had been a success and that peace was again restored to the disabled west. But, alas! for their buoyant confidence—the old sores soon broke out again, and matters grew from bad to worse. Major Frank North, commander of 300 gallant Pawnees, did much toward bringing the war to a close and many a time did he and his fearless braves ride to a victorious encounter with the Sioux—a tribe of Indians the Pawnees considered their worst enemies. Col. Carr, in command of a troop of U. S. regulars, also took a prominent part in the suppression of the outbreak, and last but not least, was Wm. Cody (Buffalo Bill), the leader of a daring squad of government scouts. Most of the engagements took place in the Republican Valley. The trail occupied much time, but eventually the Sioux were discovered by some Pawnee scouts. The Dakotas, about 2,500 strong, were surprised on a sand hill on their way to the Platte, and in hopes of disconcerting the enemy, fled in small bands in all directions. The United States troops scattered also and followed, and a few days

afterwards a party of 600 Sioux were surprised on the borders of the Platte, and an attack was made simultaneously from both sides, and in this battle, under the leadership of Buffalo Bill, many of the Indians were killed. On July 11th, 1869, Gen. Carr, with his entire command, fought a battle with the Sioux at Summit Springs. The struggle was short but complete, a few soldiers and Pawnees being killed, but on the other side over 600 Sioux fell, victims of American bullets.

Tall Bull and other prominent chiefs were killed in this battle and their deaths and the terrible defeat, discouraged and disheartened the hostile tribes, and they returned to their homes. The decisive victory of Summit Springs practically ended the Indian troubles, although many minor skirmishes took place afterwards.

CHAPTER SIX.

DAKOTA COUNTY IN ITS INFANCY—BIRTH AND DECLINE OF OMADI—ITS FIRST SETTLERS—PIONEER RECOLLECTIONS OF COVINGTON—DEATH OF MRS. REAM AND OTHER FATALITIES—BURT COUNTY'S PIONEERS—INCORPORATION OF TEKAMAH, AND EARLY SETTLERS—STRUGGLE OF LANGE, SANDWIG, LYDICK, AND OTHERS—SETTLEMENT OF LOGAN VALLEY—INCORPORATION OF OAKLAND AND LYONS—REMINISCENCES OF THE TWO VILLAGES, BIOGRAPHIES AND THE MURDER OF MUNSON.

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Warner's history of Dakota county says: "On the first day of July, 1855, George T. Woods, Armell, a Frenchman, and two Blackfeet Indians crossed the river from Iowa, and went afoot to what is now known as the Col. H. Baird Bluffs, thence south a short distance, and drove down the first claim stakes ever driven in Dakota county soil, and that Jesse Wigle, with his family, on the 19th day of August, same year, were the first to settle in the county." It further says: "The first settlers of Omadi, were Woods, C. A. Horr, and Moses Krepp, who crossed the river on September 1st, 1855, and built log cabins. The settlement grew rapidly, a saw mill was put in operation,

and native lumber sold for $30 a thousand feet; John Bay put up a log cabin store, and in '56, new settlers arrived. Then the town was laid out, and William McBeath opened a mercantile establishment, Abraham Hirsh started a hotel, followed soon afterwards by Henry Ream, who engaged in the same business. In '57 the population numbered over four hundred, and in the middle of April of this year, Miss Putman, from Sioux City, came down and taught the first school. A newspaper was launched, christened the "Enterprise," owner and editor, George W. Rust; and a shingle mill was operated by Shull and Hartman.

1857 a postoffice was granted and on March 22nd, 1858, the first village election was held, and Rev. Smith was the pioneer missionary, conducting religious services in the school house. Omadi was situated at the foot of what was known as Pilgrim's Hill, and manifested lively promises of becoming a great and thriving city some day. But, alas! through the unkindness of fate, it was ordained otherwise, for in 1862 the treacherous Missouri washed away a portion of the town, the banks continuing to crumble and tumble in from year to year, and the citizens, discouraged, moved away, and now all that remains of this once hopeful and prosperous village sleeps today under the broad bosom of an unmerciful river.

Mr. Warner continues as follows: "A plat of the town of Dakota City was filed for record September 20th, 1856, by J. D. M. Crockwell, and incorporated by the county commissioners April 5th, 1858. Covington was first taken as a townsite in 1856 by the old Sioux City company, of which Dr. John Cook was president, and christened Harney City. The townsite was jumped by another company and the name of the village changed to Newport, but before it was filed for record, February 4th, 1857, it was given the name of Covington and incorporated by the county commissioners, September 1st, 1858. Gustave Pecaut was the first settler, building a log cabin and making this his home in 1854. The first child born was John Quin, 1857; the first marriage, John Feenan to Margurette Boyle, and the first death, an old man who was found dead down near the river. The first sermon was delivered by Rev. Thomas Chestnut of Sioux City, and the first school taught by Mary Pinkerton, 1857, in a little log school house. John Fennen launched the first boat, a flat barge, to convey passengers across the river; and in 1889, John Moan and others built a pontoon bridge at a cost of $20,000, opened to the public May 18th with spirited demonstrations of pleasure, in which thousands of people took part. The first news-

paper in the town was established 1870, its name the "Covington News," proprietor and editor, B. L. North, and early as '57 the village enjoyed the privileges of a postoffice with Charles D. Martin as its initiatory conductor.

In September, 1855, a band of Sioux Indians swept down upon the little settlement of Omadi and stole everything the villagers had, even to their boat; but no one was injured. During the same summer three Ponca Indians entered the home of Henry Ream, living in the northwestern part of Dakota county, and after ransacking his house, pulled his wife from her bed upon which she lay, seriously ill from childbirth. The lady died a few days after, as well as the baby; and the Indians were captured and executed.

The population of Dakota county in 1855 was eighty-six, in 1890, 5,599. Following is some of the crimes and casualties as given by Mr. Warner that have taken place in Dakota county:

August, 1856, Moses Bacon, while crossing the river to Covington in a small boat, capsized, his skift running upon a snag, and he was drowned.

1857, John Fitzpatrick shot by George Griffey in a saloon at Covington. They were quarreling about a claim.

William Tucker in the spring of '56 was killed in

the Omadi saw mill by being caught in a belt and crushed to death while circling the fly wheel.

Dominick Beilinski shot and killed Jim Harris, a Winnebago, January, 1878, whom he claimed was cutting a tree on Beilinski's claim. The murderer jumped his bail and was never heard of since.

Emma Biggs jumped from a ferryboat into the river at Covington July, 1880, and was drowned.

William Hull committed suicide in the winter of '81, going to a ravine southeast of Homer, where he shot himself.

Mrs. Ludwig Kipper, despondent from ill health, cut her throat at her home near Homer, and died from the effects of her rash deed, August 25th, 1888.

Michael Dorsey was shot and killed by Patrick Boyle at Jackson, February 5th, 1880. Boyle established a plea of self-defense, and was cleared.

The Homer State Bank was robbed of $1,500 on the night of October 1st, 1891; no clew was secured of the robbers, however, although the county commissioners offered a reward of $200 for the arrest and conviction of the thieves.

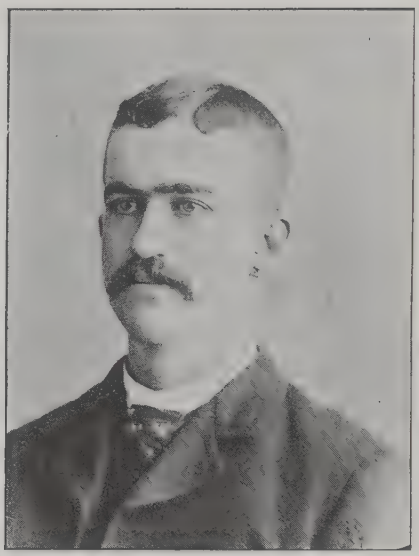
The first justice of the peace for Omaha precinct was Samuel Smith, 1856, and in 1863 the name was changed to Dakota precinct. The first justice of the

peace for Omadi precinct, 1857, was Alexander Ford, later followed by G. Lampson.

Burt county was christened in honor of Nebraska's first governor, Francis Burt. Its early settlers suffered many hardships, and in the winter of '55, when the big snow storm came, two of the pioneers, F. E. Lange and Ernest Sandig, living at that time in a little shanty on what is known as Gillick's Bend; in the spring, when the high water came and the river overflowed, they were cut off from all intercourse, and to save themselves from starvation subsisted on the carcass of an ox that had froze to death, and also compelled to butcher and eat a pet dog as the last resort.

The first election in Burt county took place in December, 1854, in which B. R. Folsom was sent to the Territorial Council, and Gen. Robertson and H. C. Purple were sent to the House of Representatives. May 16th, '55, Folsom was appointed probate judge by Governor Cuming.

The first election for county officers was held November 6th, 1855, with the result as follows: Wm. Bates, probate judge; John Nevitt, sheriff; Lewis Peterson, register, and Olney Harrington and Adam Olinger, justices of the peace. In 1876 the Chicago, St. Paul & Minneapolis railroad reached Tekamah and up to 1880 extended its tracks as far as Bancroft.



Charles O. Freeman, Pioneer Schoolboy
of Nebraska.

On April 19th, 1855, a permanent settlement was founded at Tekamah, by the following party of pioneers: B. R. Folsom, Z. T. Wilder, John B. Folsom, Niles R. Folsom, W. F. Goodwill, and W. N. Byers, the latter gentleman naming the town, and who did not remain long. The year before the election the inhabitants of Burt county did not number but twenty-six. The town was incorporated March 14th, 1855, and immediately became the county seat. Olney Harrington was the first postmaster and Miles Chicot the first merchant. Some of the earliest pioneers of Tekamah are as follows: W. W. and J. P. Latta, P. F. Peterson, George P. Thomas, Isaac Gibson, Conger, Haywood, Robert Carr, E. Shaffer, John Driscoll, and many others.

Folsom was a native of Germany; came to Burt county 1854 with others and laid out a claim of 640 acres, now the city of Tekamah; engaged in farming, and with his brother conducted a saw mill on the Arizona Bottoms, first of its kind north of Omaha.

Gibson, a native of Indiana, arrived in Tekamah in the spring of '57; purchased a grocery—the only one in the village; also bought a 540-acre farm; interested in real estate and live stock; probate judge 1863.

W. W. Latta was born in Ashland county, Ohio, and made Burt county his home in July, 1857; his

brother James came out a few years later. Both gentlemen prominent characters in the history of the county; progressive men; now engaged in banking business and one of the largest stock raisers and farmers in eastern Nebraska.

Peterson, an Illinois boy, went to California in 1852 and located in Burt county in 1855; pre-empted 160 acres; postmaster of Tekamah for several years; his daughter, Emma, first white child born in the county.

George P. Thomas was born in New York and in the fall of '55 arrived in Tekamah; located in the timber and set up a steam saw mill he brought with him, which he operated successfully for one year, and then it was destroyed by fire; progressive farmer; built an elevator and later engaged in drug business; elected to the office of sheriff and served four years; also member of the first state legislature.

Wm. B. Beck, from Scotland, settled in Burt county in 1855, and entered into farming; represented Burt county in the Territorial legislature, 1855-56, and member of the senate in 1879.

John L. Burpee, born in the state of Massachusetts, came to Nebraska in 1858; 1862 went to Pennsylvania and engaged in stave shingle and mill business;

returned to Burt county, 1864. A successful and an ambitious farmer.

H. C. Lydick, an Ohio boy, settled in Arizona precinct in 1856; locating a claim of 160 acres upon which his residence stands now; 1862 enlisted in Company B, Second Nevada cavalry, serving eleven months. In an early day, Mr. Lydick's home was a dug-out, and his principal occupation trading and selling horses to the Indians and his neighbor settlers; now owns over a thousand acres and a prominent stock feeder and raiser of the county.

P. L. Rork, a native of New York, is one of the foremost characters of Burt county; 1862 enlisted in Company C, Eleventh Michigan cavalry; upon being mustered out made his home in Arizona precinct; a fearless republican and an active member in county politics.

M. M. Harney, from Jacksonville, Illinois, came to De Soto, 1857; enlisted in the Union army, serving eleven months; 1864 located in Arizona precinct; owns several hundred acres of land and one of the solid farmers of the county.

J. H. Stork is a native of Prussia, Europe, and in the spring of 1856 made his home at Fontenelle, Nebraska; 1863 enlisted in Company A, Second Nebraska cavalry, serving eleven months; married Miss Michael,

and the young couple settled on the Arizona Bottom in 1865; owns 520 acres and his improvements up-to-date and creditable.

H. M. Spielman, of Arizona precinct, was born in Blair county, Pennsylvania, and came to Burt county 1857; pre-empted 160 acres, his possessions accruing until now he owns nearly 1,000 acres; an active member of the school board in his district. His brother Jesse located close to him in the same year and now owns over 1,000 acres; also first treasurer of Burt county. Both brothers were actively engaged in the stock business for many years.

Elisha McGuire, from Carroll county, Ohio, came to Iowa in '51, and drove stage; moved to Omaha in '58, and drove stage out of this city for two years; in 1860 located on a farm in Arizona precinct; 1863 enlisted in Company B, Second Nebraska. Mr. McGuire is one of the oldest of the pioneers of the west living.

A few other old settlers are as follows: Samuel Cornelius, from Pennsylvania, came to Tekamah in 1857; A. N. Corbin, from same state, in the fall of '56, settled in Burt county; John Fees, coming with his parents, and born March 2nd, 1856, in Tekamah, claims he was the first white boy born in the county; and M. L. Reyman, from Washington county, In-

diana, locating in Burt county, December, 1857.

The first settler to locate upon the site which now represents the bustling little city of Oakland was Aaron Arlington and when the town was laid out and incortives of Pennsylvania, made this spot their home in 1859. John Oak, from the eastern part of the county, went over in 1862 and purchased the site from Mr. Arlington, who with his wife and four daughters, naporated it was named in honor of Mr. Oak. Some of the earlier pioneers to make this settlement their home were James Askwig, Morrell, George Heales, and John S. Lemmon. The first store was opened by Marks and Ross in 1870, and the first physician, Dr. Leeper, and the first lawyer, A. B. Charde. Rev. Axling preached the first sermon, and the first school taught was by Miss Paulina Clark, in 1878, and its first and oldest newspaper, the "Independent," established by George Brewster, October 1st, 1880. Beginning with a population of six, the census of Oakland now will reach very close to the 1,500 mark.

John S. Lemmon is one of the important early settlers of this town, although his home for the past few years has been in Thurston county. A native of Indiana, he came to Council Bluffs in 1854; removed to Fontenelle, where his father was running a saw mill, and worked for him until '61, when he enlisted in the

Union army. Taken prisoner near Atlanta, Georgia, 1864, and a prisoner of war until the spring of 1865; 1868 moved to Oakland on a farm, and remained there until the new town Pender was laid out, and then moved to that locality to battle with the gods of fortune. Mr. Lemmon has been a leading character in the history of Thurston county.

A. B. Charde, an eastern boy, came to Decatur in 1875 and commenced the study of law with Watson Parish and completed his studies with F. M. Johnson in 1878; removed to Oakland and engaged in the law and real estate business.

Watson Parish, an attorney and banker, was born in the state of Tennessee; he and Mr. James Ashley of Decatur opened the first bank in Oakland and when the war broke out enlisted in the Union army, serving four months. His first home in Nebraska was in Decatur, 1866; elected to the legislature 1869, and served an extra session; moved to Oakland shortly after it was incorporated; a few years ago went to California and made an immense fortune in real estate, but lately lost considerable of it through bad speculations.

William E. Peebles, one of the early merchandise dealers of Oakland, was born in Elgin, Illinois; his father was a doctor of medicine and a preacher of the gospel; 1867 came with his parents to Decatur, Ne-

braska, and father and son conducted a drug and grocery store in the building now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Page, who have converted it into a first-class hotel. Mr. Peebles was a man of ability, and it was through his influence, assisted by Henry Fontenelle, that Thurston county was organized. He was the founder of the village of Pender and had the town laid out, and built the famous brick hotel of that city at a cost of very near $40,000. Mr. Peebles died in the summer of 1900, at his handsome home in Pender.

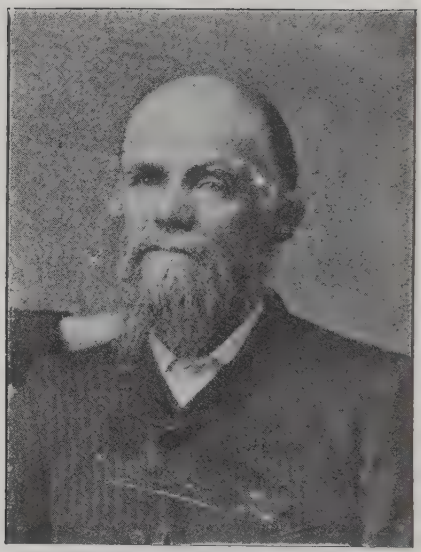
Ira Thomas is a native of New York state, and arrived in Tekamah, 1869; at one time editor and proprietor of the "Nebraska Advocate." One of the early settlers of Oakland and engaged in the grain business. Mr. Thomas is a straightforward democrat and one of the leading lawyers of the county.

The first permanent settlers of Lyons were Waldo Lyon and Josiah Everett and his three brothers, locating here in the latter part of the '60's; also the Hart brothers, Peter McMullin, and in 1867, Levi Richardson and his family moved over from Decatur. Mr. Lyons, running a saw mill down on the Arizona Bottoms, sawed out a pile of lumber, moved it over on the Logan, built himself a house, pre-empted 160 acres, entered enough more to make out a section, and then laid out the town which bears his name. The first

child born in the settlement was a daughter of Pete McMullin's. Rev. Peebles of Decatur preached the first sermon, and it was through his influence a Presbyterian church was established and built in the village. Mr. Peebles bought most of the lumber in Chiciga and had it shipped out.

The beautiful valley in which Lyons lays was named by the Quincy colony in honor of Logan Fontenelle, a prominent leader of the Omaha Indians, who was a peaceful man and who showed the whites many favors and hospitalities, during their early entrance into this country. When Mr. Lyon laid out his village into town lots he inserted the following eccentric clause in each deed: That no intoxicants could be sold on the premises and in violation thereof the property to revert back to him—and to this day Lyons is without a saloon. A few of the pioneers of Logan Valley and its neighborhood is given as follows:

Waldo Lyons was born in Vermont and reared in Connecticut; 1843 moved to Wisconsin, and in the fall of '65 went to Omaha, where he engaged in the merchandise business for one year, and then came to Arizona precinct, Burt county, conducting a general store and operating a saw mill. It was in '69 that Mr. Lyon moved out on the Logan, and the year following he built the big flour mill in the town of which he is the



James Ashley

founder. Elected to the state senate, and also a member of the first state constitutional convention.

R. S. Hart and his brothers, James and Charles, are among the first settlers of Logan Valley, locating claims there in 1865, emigrating from Wisconsin; 1861, Riley enlisted in Company B., Tenth Wisconsin cavalry, serving three years; fall of '81, R. S. moved from his farm to Lyons and entered into the implement business. He has the honor of having broke the first piece of prairie and turned the first sod where the village of Lyons now stands.

Franklin Everett was born in Maine, and came to Wisconsin, 1852, and in 1868 arrived in Burt county; occupation, banker, farmer and stock raiser, and large land owner—a landlord noted for his kindness and generosity to his renters; 1874 he opened up a general store in Lyons and was appointed postmaster. The Everetts represent a large family, are wealthy, and prominent figures in western Burt county.

Other pioneers of that neighborhood are: Joel Yeaton, the Fiscuss families, Joe Smith, and Beal Barber. Mr. Comer was one of the first store-keepers of Lyons, also Freeland and Warner, John Freeland, a brother residing in Decatur, hauling the firms merchandise over from Onawa, Iowa. The pioneers of Logan Valley were never molested, but when the news was

brought to them of the killing of Munson by six Winnebagoes, it alarmed and worried the settlers, and the report also awakened a feeling of horror and furious indignation in the hearts of the people, which swept over the entire country. Munson lived out on Plum Creek and was in his field with a yoke of oxen breaking land when treacherously and without warning he was murderously attacked by six Winnebago Indians that previous to this brutal and cowardly meeting had appeared friendly and neighborly. Not satisfied with hacking their victim to death with tomahawks, Munson's head was cut off and tossed carelessly in the grasses of the prairie to become food for the wolves. The body was discovered shortly after the committal of the foul crime, by a white neighbor, and a committee appointed to investigate the ghastly affair, of which Frank Fisher, now living in Decatur, was one. The Indians were run down, tried in a court of justice, and sentenced to the penitentiary for life, where they all died with one exception, "White Breast," who was released from prison on account of sickness and sent home, and who died a few days after his arrival at the Winnebago agency.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

TRAGIC DEATH OF MELLISH—NEBRASKA'S FIRST RAILROAD SURVEY—REMINISCENCES OF DECATUR—MURDER AT COVINGTON—STRUGGLES OF '56 AND LIFE ON THE BORDER—OMAHA'S BIG PAYMENT—A MEMOIR OF SARPY, THE FAMOUS PIONEER—DESTRUCTION OF THE BROWN HOTEL, AND THE SUICIDE OF MRS. BROWN AND ED. GRIFFIN—ERECTION OF DECATUR'S BRICK SCHOOL HOUSE—THE VILLAGE COAL MINING COMPANY—SHOOTING OF CRAGON—DISASTROUS FIRE—ORGANIZATION OF SECRET SOCIETIES—STATISTICS ON BURT COUNTY, AND THE STATE—POPULATION—PROGRESS OF INDUSTRIES, ETC.

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Reverting back again to early recollections of Decatur, the winter of '57 witnessed the beginning of a solemn drama, when Henry Mellish, a young eastern lad, of elastic health, drifted in a blinding snow storm up the lonely Wood Creek valley and was lost sight of forever. Mellish came up from St. Louis on a steamboat and went to work on the new agency dwellings, then being built on the site where the old Henry Fontenelle house stands now. Shortly after its com pletion, the residence took fire, on an early Saturday

morning, and the settlers were awakened from a sound sleep hastened to the scene of disaster, Mellish among them, to render what aid they could, but when they arrived, human effort could not have saved the building, and all the villagers could do was to stand idly but anxiously by, and watch the handsome structure hungrily devoured by the ravishes of the wild flames. When the fire had completed its work of destruction, it began snowing, fast and thick, the storm continuing until evening, and Mellish was not missed, only when some one at the supper table inquired where he was. The next morning a searching party was instituted, and the country scoured for miles around, but without reward. Waldo Thompson, the next spring, on his way to Arlington's, living where Oakland is now, when about half way, came very near being thrown from his horse, the ainmal shying at some hidden object in the grass. Thompson dismounted, and in his search found a man's skull, some human bones, and a little farther off a man's coat. He returned to town with his discoveries, and Dr. Whitacre made an examination of the skull and identified it as that of Mellish's by a gold filling in one of the teeth, a piece of dental work he had executed for the unfortunate young man during the summer of '56. The remains were tenderly placed in a neatly home-made coffin, and

amid touching ceremonies, interred on the hill back of where the village school house stands today; and this burial constitutes the first interment to have taken place in the Decatur cemetery.

Although the tracks have not been laid, the rumbling of the rolling wheels of the flying cars have not been heard, and a daring engineer must yet pull the throttle that blows his whistle of warning, a survey was made for a practical route many long and weary years ago—and it will go down in history as the first in Nebraska, with that venerable old pioneer, Capt. S. T. Leaming, as its chief, and Christopher C. Dunn as baggagemaster of the overland trip. Other members of the party were Don Barker, Wm. McBride, and John Kispert. The survey began in the fall of '58, in the little settlement of Decatur, starting the chain from the banks of the river and carried to a point beyond the Elkhorn, compassing a distance of over fifty miles, and the work only abandoned then on account of a shortage in provisions, and advancing cold weather. The survey was called the "Decatur and South Pass Railroad," a feasable and direct line to the Rocky mountains, authorized by the great Northwestern, known in those days under another name. The first camp (an American wall tent and an Indian buffalo teepee) was pitched at the head of

Elm Creek valley, and the party awakened from a sound sleep by the crackling of a fierce and sweeping prairie fire. The next day occurred a total eclipse of the sun, the wind blowing strongly and cold. As it was dark as night, it impeded the progress of the boys and they were compelled to lay over until it cleared up. To cross the Logan, a tree was felled, and Dunn, to transport his oxen and the loaded wagon, had to go below a few miles and ford the stream. The first time he tried it his outfit got stuck, and this forced him to sleep out alone one night, but the next morning his companions came down and pulled Dunn out. Up on the Elkhorn the surveying party camped near a settlement of two families, Moore and Babbitt, which was called Dewitt. Here the boys were treated very kindly by a man named Crawford. The next summer Dewitt was raided by a band of pilfering Pawnees, and Moore and Babbitt driven away from their homes. A rude raft was constructed and floated in the Elkhorn for the surveyors to go back and forth on in the prosecution of their work on the other side of the river, and this, including a few other incidents, constitutes the first railroad survey made in Nebraska Territory.

Christopher C. Dunn, formerly of Decatur, and now residing in Blair, is one of Nebraska's oldest set-

tlers, a man of truth and veracity, with a mind crisp, bright and retentive, and for the following reminiscences the author acknowledges his indebtednesses:

In the fall of 1856 an honest and well-meaning homesteader was brutally shot down in his own doorway on a farm where the city of Covington stands now, with his wife standing by his side; the murderer coolly mounting his horse and riding away. The presumption is, he was the hired tool of one of the notorious claim clubs of those days, some of which stopped short of nothing, to gain possession of a piece of land they coveted. The murderer to escape the wrath of the settlement, fled, making his first stop-over in Decatur, registering for the night at the Brown hotel. It so happened Sheriff Wilson and Chris Dunn occupied the room adjoining the one taken by the man from the north, and were kept awake most of the night by their next door neighbor walking the floor. The sheriff, suspicioning something wrong, told Dunn he intended making an investigation the next morning and should his suspicions warrant it, he would place the fellow under arrest. They arose early, went down and inquired of the landlord who the stranger might be—but too late; the bird had flown. The widow of the murdered man protested possession by the claim club, and in the contest which followed for owner-

ship, a decision came from Washington in favor of the woman. The adverse claimants had already put up a sawmill and made other improvements, part of which they never recovered.

In 1859, E. D. Borum was struck dead by a stroke of lightning. He and Dunn were sitting side by side on a bench in front of the village hotel, at that time under the management of Guy Barnum; and Adam Kerns was standing in the doorway. A light storm came up suddenly, and not so very much thunder; a flash of lightning chased across the sky, and Borum fell dead, from his seat, face down, to the sidewalk. At the postmortem it could not be shown that even the skin had been broken by the flash, nor any marks on the body to show it had been burned. However, the coroner ascribed the cause of death to disfusion of lightning.

Christopher C. Dunn came to Decatur with Will Phillips, James Johnson, and Herman Cole, from Cuming City, Neb., enticed to this village by news of a railroad that was to be built there. Their last breakfast on the trip was eaten with Louis Peterson and his wife at the farm which is now known as the Latta ranch, the bill of fare consisting principally of dried elk's meat. The little party arrived in Decatur in the evening, and the boys put up at the "Turn

General Store of George M. Byram.

Around Tavern," known as the city hotel, a small, two-room affair, roofed only on one side, the other side being covered with an old tent. Dunn was out of tobacco and wanted some, and on inquiring for a store was directed to Lambert's trading post—nothing more than a little rough and ready log house. Without more ceremony, Dunn pushed the door open and walked in, little thinking his timely arrival would prevent a murder. A man was lying flat on his back on the floor and another man sitting astride of him, with a long butcher knife in his hand, just in the act of striking a fatal blow. Dunn stepped in as Paul Dominick exclaimed, "Sacre dege mur," a French curse of some choice variety which the author would not dare attempt to interpret, and then it was he leaned forward to drive the knife into his victim's heart, when quick as a flash Dunn jumped, catching Dominick by the wrists and then called for help, the appeal being answered by Tom McDonald. The men were parted and finally pacified. The fellow who lay on the floor was Pat Hamilton. This incident gives the reader an idea of the character of some of the dare devil spirits the settlers had to deal with in those wild and adventurous times.

The spring of 1857 was when the first big payment was made to the Omaha Indians, representing $40,000

in gold, $20 per capita, issued by the agent, under a huge cottonwood tree north of Wood creek, about 100 yards from the Missouri river. Henry Fontenelle was government interpreter, and Sarpy and Lambert both had a yard full of ponies, which they sold to the Indians for $100 a head. The chiefs got first choice then the sub-chiefs, and so on down to the common warrior. A small piece of rope was presented the purchaser, who entered the yard alone, and, making his selection, caught his own horse. Tom McDonald conducted a temporary store on the grounds and sold flour and meat to the Indians for fancy prices. To depict Sarpy as Dunn remembers him in a word picture the man would appear something like this: In statue, low sized, rather heavy, dark complexioned, full of energy, rather high tempered, generous and kind, ambitious and a hard drinker—a very determined and good looking man. Necoma, an Omaha Indian, was his wife, and when Sarpy died he willed her a small sum of money. While he was shrewd and also an advocate of peace, yet he recognized no law but a square deal and a good trade, and always slept with one eye open for business. It is said Sarpy had been married several times and when he was living with Tacoma, had a white woman for a wife, in the city of Omaha. He was united to his Indian woman in ac-

cordance with the customs of her tribe, which is nothing more than mutual consent, and giving the bride's father a few ponies, robes, etc.

John McMurphy came to Nebraska from New York in 1867 and lived to be one of the foremost writers in our state. Clerked and freighted for Charlie Porter and engaged in the mercantile business for himself; married Miss Dakin, a Decatur girl; established the "Hoof and Horn," of South Omaha; at one time on the editorial staff of the Bee; editor of a paper at Blair, and editor and proprietor of a daily at Beatrice. Mr. McMurphy was endowed with a broad intellect, generous to a fault, and a man who fought for the battles of Nebraska from start to finish, and for the good he accomplished, will live in the hearts of the people and on the pages of our state's history. Mr. McMurphy died very suddenly in the city of Omaha a few years ago with an affection of the heart. His loyalty to a friend or employe may be cited by illustrating the circumstances under which he lost one of his eyes.

1859 John was working for Steven Decatur on his ranch at Decatur Springs, taking care of stock and doing other chores. One spring morning a big prairie fire swept down the valley threatening to destroy everything before it. McMurphy, anxious to save the

Commodore's property from destruction, jumped into the high flames of the tall grass, regardless of his own welfare, and by persistent stubbornness succeeded in changing the course of the fire enough so that Decatur's property escaped the fierce ravish, but in his brave fight, his face and hands were badly blistered, and from the effects of the injuries received, lost the power of sight in his left eye.

The first labor for Dunn to perform in Decatur was a little blacksmith work up on the side hill, for John A. Horbaugh, who had broken some of the irons on his wagon—the first man to do any farming around Decatur; and helped to put together the first locomotive this side of Chicago, the "Blackhawk," of which there is a record.

Dominick shot himself a short time after his attempt to kill Pat Hamilton in Lambert's store. Mr. Lambert had loaded his wagons for Pike's Peak, ready to go, Dominick to accompany him, but it rained the morning they intended starting, so Lambert ordered the goods unpacked, stating he would defer the trip until the weather had settled. This displeased Dominick very much and he became sulky. During the unloading, he went to the back of the wagon and jerked out his rifle, a Winchester, and the trigger must have caught in the endgate for the gun exploded, the con-

tents hitting Dominick square in the stomach, and he died the next day.

Christopher C. Dunn was born at Mount Lucas, Kings county, Ireland, November 20th, 1830. Expert machinist, mastering his trade in the shops of Nugent & Owens of Chicago; was caught on Broadway, New York City, in the McCrady riot, and saw the gutters run with blood in front of the Astor house after the first volley was fired by Jim Fiske's City Guards; enlisted as a volunteer, and first sergeant of Monfarey's Chicago City Guards, and on duty in the lager beer riots in 1855. Came to Decatur April, 1857, and married Miss Theresa Jane Welch, a young lady who opened the first millinery shop in Burt county, the ceremony being performed at Onawa, Iowa, in 1862. In 1858 three commissioners were appointed by the territorial legislature: James E. Wilson, Stephen Decatur, and Christopher Dunn, to locate a road from Decatur to West Point. Dunn plowed a deed furrow to mark out the road between the two towns, and it was a God-send, for in those days the country was a naked wilderness, and the wandering pioneer losing his way from the dim trails of the prairie, when he came in contact with the line, knew by acting on the implied suggestion of either direction, at the terminus

would be found a settlement of neighborly white people.

To picture Nebraska Territory briefly as it was in those days the description would read something like the following: The territory was still the home of the Indian. Columbus was a small trading point, its only dwelling a rough and ready hotel for the accommodation of freighters, scouts, travellers, and trappers, a small flat boat to carry passengers across the Loupe, one store and a handful of settlers. At Grand Island a small colony of foreigners had squatted, who lived in shanties. At Kearney was a traders' post and Julesburg, the last station going west, a little later boasted of a telegraph office. Besides a few other inland settlements and including the Missouri river towns, such was the meagre inhabitation of Nebraska in 1858, when the march of civilization had begun in earnest to break down the thick undergrowth of the rich and fertile west.

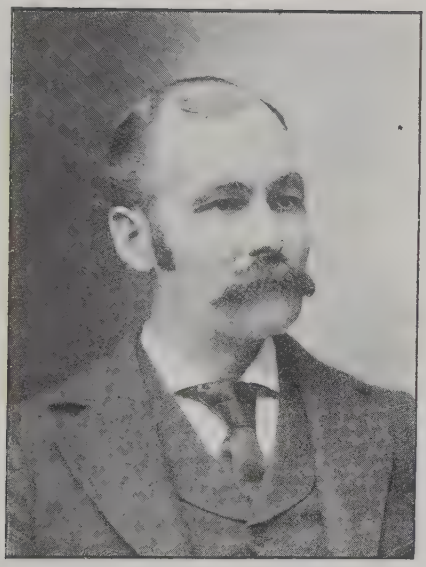
Decatur settlement in the year of 1856 looked anything else but the prosperous and lively town she is now, with her peace and plenty, enjoying the labor, improvement and wealth of an enterprising population very close to the one thousand mark. On what the citizens call Main street now, which constituted the entire village then, there stood three unfinished

shanties, two log cabins, "Hi" Chase's one-room trading post, and Sarpy's so-called frame store, built of rough cottonwood slabs. On the bottomlands, the buffalo, elk, and deer roamed at will, and in the rich and fertile valleys, a multitude of tall and slender grasses moved in graceful motion to the slightest breath of wind. In the morning could be heard the gobble of the turkey and in the eventide came the timid quack of ducks and other wild fowl off in the gloaming. The settlement barely numbered twelve, and a white woman was yet to make her debut. The daily diet consisted of corn bread and jerked meat, and white bread a luxury and almost unknown, for flour had to be imported from a long distance, and then at a great expense. The persevering pioneer's bed was manufactured out of discarded dry goods and grocery boxes, nailed up in one corner of his homely hut, and to soften it, an armful of dry slough grass was thrown upon the board slats. For lights, candles were manufactured of tallow, in moulds a household tool which some of the settlers had brought with them from the east. Others unable to secure enough lumber with which to manufacture a bedstead, spread their blankets and robes upon the floor and so rested and slept through the night.

This little home in the wilderness was treeless and

to gladden their hearts with the sight of foliage, the inhabitants must look into the forests of Iowa or wander in the scattering timber up along Wood creek. The ground was wet and swampy in places, and the only visitors, peaceful Indians from the reservation, decorated with bright paints and waving plumes of the eagle and hawk, who came down to barter their furs and spend their money for provisions and to lay in a supply of "pa-da-ne," better known in those days under the names of "rot-gut" and "whisky."

The severity of the winter of '56 drove most of the settlers south, but with the coming of spring they all returned again, and then Decatur Townsite Company was organized, the village laid out, and steamboats transporting lumber up the river—the material was used for the construction of new dwellings. The company spent many thousands of dollars for the purpose of improving and beautifying the town. Trees were planted, a ferry established, and Capt. Leaming, as first mayor, was the father of the village. Judge Doane, now of Omaha, a young barrister from the east, arrived in town, built himself a neat little office, hung out his shingle and began the practice of his profession. Dr. Whitacre presided as village physician, and Mat Wilbur returned from Omaha with his wife, and brought with him a team of horses and a wagon,



Hon. H. D. Byram

the first to enter the town. Frank Welch was installed as city postmaster, but Hinman, who came over from Onawa in '55, was postmaster for the settlement, superceded by a man named Percival, and then followed the appointment of Welch.

New store buildings were erected as well as new homes; the Omahas began receiving large annuities, spending the most of their gold dollars in Decatur, thus circulating an enormous amount of money that was very acceptable and beneficial. Mechanics and determined farmers from the east located in the community; a three-story hotel was built in the town, also a city hall and a school house started, and with this splendid commencement and output, Decatur presented an appearance that was not only bright but promising.

On May 1st, 1862, letters patent in the United States were granted Decatur and signed by President Abraham Lincoln. In the fall of 1869 it was made a city of the second class, and in the spring of 1880 reduced to a village again. The first birth in Decatur was a daughter of O. F. Wilson, and the first death that of John Gardner. In 1859 a Mr. Paul, who had located on a piece of land south of Decatur, with the view of starting a rival town, accidentally shot and

killed himself. He intended naming his town, "St. Paul."

Since this memorial date the growth and advancement of Decatur has been slow but steady, often meeting with some discouraging handicap, only to begin its march of progress again, with renewed energy and vigor.

In the early '70's the city council granted Lewis and Coyle a charter to operate a steam ferry, the first of its kind on the river at this point. In the summer of 1875 the present handsome brick school building was erected under the supervision of A. B. Fuller, this gentleman turning out his own brick, and it was in the same year he built the splendid brick residence which his widow lives in now, at a cost of $5,000; and early in the morning, May 30, "Decoration Day," the Brown Hotel, built in 1857, caught fire and burned to the ground, then the property of Fuller, and his loss on furniture alone was over $1,200.

During the winter of '76, Mrs. Brown, the wife of the village blacksmith, living then where the Stillman family reside now, committed suicide by cutting her throat with a butcher knife. Mrs. Brown was suffering from ill health and had recently lost a daughter she was very fond of, and it was the opinion of friends her great grief and gloomy despondency is what

caused the lady to destroy her life. Mr. Brown and his sons shortly after this sad event moved to Onawa, but these gentlemen still claimed Decatur for their home, and proved their right by coming back each fall for several years to vote. They eventually changed their residence, however, and are now active and progressive farmers of the Divide.

It was in the winter of 1880 when Ed. Griffin tired of this mundane world and blew out his brains while sitting on his wife's lap, one evening at his home; the residence property now occupied by James Dillon and family. Ed. was a barber by trade, handsome, and a very stylish young fellow. Sensitive by nature, he took part in an oyster supper given by a party of friends on the night of the tragedy, and was grievously offended by some thoughtless remark offered in a careless manner by one of his jolly associates. A few bottles of intoxicating beverages were opened, and it goes without saying, the boys enjoyed the careless and happy influence and were "feeling their oats a trifle." Ed. upon returning home, kissed his wife, bit off a chew of tobacco, and then told her he was going to leave this world of false friends and hard times, and before she could remonstrate, carried out his awful threat.

On the 29th day of March, 1879, the Decatur Bank

was incorporated, with James Ashley as president, Walter Drury, cashier, and Watson Parish, assistant cashier; capital stock, $10,000. Later Parish moved to Oakland; E. D. Canfield bought out Drury's interests, and on January 1st, 1890, Thomas R. Ashley purchased a one-third share; and on May 1st, 1898, the bank closed its doors from mutual dissatisfaction of business, by the partners, paying one hundred cents on the dollar. Previous to the incorporation of the bank of Decatur, Charles D. Dakin had conducted a banking business, receiving deposits and making loans, and called himself a banker. During all these years of progress a grist mill had been put in operation, now the property of M. J. Kenyon, also a saw mill, now the property of Charles Noyse, and a brick yard conducted by C. C. Bacon. In 1889 and the years following brought forth new enterprises as well as more accidents. In 1881 a newspaper was established, entitled "The Decatur Herald," first edited by a man named Woodward, succeeded by Price and Neville.

The same year a mining company was organized, consisting of A. B. Fuller, George Atwater, Walter Drury, and others, for the purpose of excavating for coal in the neighborhood, as some good indications and favorable specimens had been discovered. Col. George F. Straight, a mining expert, was employed to

make the test and supervise the investigations. At a depth of 70 feet a vein of lignite coal was found, and at a depth of 570 feet a vein of four and a half feet was struck, but the cost of digging the mineral was too great and so the work was abandoned—and thus vanished Decatur's mining possibilities—perhaps forever. In the forepart of the eighty's, Mr. Fuller built a large two-story merchandise store for Mr. Hobbs, now occupied by John T. Choyce and Ernest Rohde, and other substantial improvements were made in the town.

On the evening of January 1st, 1882, Frank Cragon was shot, accidentally, in the store of Atwater and Hoppock and crippled for life. He was on his way to the postoffice and had stopped in at the store to warm, and also making preparations to attend a dance that night. Shortly after the fatal occurrence he became the protege of Mrs. Mary C. Page, and through all the years of his sickness and helplessness this lady was very considerate in her care for his welfare and comfort. Frank appreciated the services, and as he often said to his friends, "My dear mother could not be kinder and more patient with me than Mrs. Page is." About 1884 he started a small paper which he named "The Decatur Eaglet," certainly a very bright little paper. Frank was a sagacious young fellow and

had he retained his health would have made a mark for himself. In the summer of 1889 a spirit of progress moved him and he entered into a newspaper enterprise in the city of Pender with Harry S. Swenson as a partner, but remained only a few months, when a terrible siege of homesickness overtook him and he returned to his adopted mother in Decatur, Mrs. Page. Cragon's health was very poor when he arrived in Decatur, and the changing brought no improvement, which he had hoped for, and on December 6th, 1889, the poor fellow was called to the other world by that grim and unmerciful messenger of death, and laid to rest in the village cemetery.

In the latter part of the seventies the Wood's hotel was built, a very handsome and commodious little tavern, and it enjoyed a profitable business for several years, but about '88 the shadow of destruction fell across its threshold and it burned to the ground. At the time of the accident the hotel was under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ashley.

The year 1890 witnessed new enterprises and also a very disastrous fire. It took place on the morning of August 8th, and perhaps the worst to occur in the village. Byram Brothers' large merchandise store very mysteriously broke out in flames, and this building was not the only one destroyed, but also T. A.

Loveland's harness shop, and John G. Ashley's fine general store, just replete with a new and fresh line of goods. Most of the business firms were covered with insurance, but Byram Brothers were only partly so, and their net loss was over $7,000. A few months prior to this event their store was entered by burglars and $120 taken, besides some of the stock.

On the evening of August 10th, two days after the fire, a surprise party was tendered to Mr. Henry Byram and his wife at their cottage home by a host of friends and neighbors, in honor of their tenth wedding anniversary. Mr. Byram was presented with a gold watch and chain and Mrs. Byram with a silver cake basket, Rev. Hamilton and Rev. Miller delivering the speeches of presentation. A delicious luncheon was served on the lawn, consisting of ices, fruit, and cake. It was a beautiful moonlight night and the artistic arrangement of Japanese and Chinese lanterns hung effectively in the rich foliage of the shrubbery and trees, presented a picture of harmony and delight. Under the leadership of B. F. McDonald, the Decatur Silver Cornet Band filled the night with song and charming music, which made light the hearts of the merry feasters. Mr. and Mrs. Byram will always look back to this occasion as one of the happiest moments

of their lives, and as an expression of public sentiment and kindness which can never be forgotten.

In regard to the secret organizations of Decatur, they will be enumerated as follows: A charter was granted Decatur Camp, M. W. A., No. 673, on the 9th day of April, 1890, by Head Counsel W. H. Northcott, of Fulton, Illinois. A charter was granted the Royal Neighbors, an auxiliary to the Woodmen, March 23rd, 1899, by Mrs. E. D. Watt, Supreme Oracle. Both camps have been very progressive since their organization, and now have enrolled a large membership.

The W. O. W.'s Red Elm Camp was granted a charter December 2nd, 1898, by Joseph Cullen Root, Head Counsel Commander of Omaha. Woodman Circle, an auxiliary to the W. O. W., was organized February 8th, 1900. The number of the camp is 39. Although these two orders are young they have enjoyed a very encouraging growth.

On the evening of April 11th, 1898, a charter was granted the Modern Brotherhood of America by the Supreme President with a charter membership of 19. While the lodge is not numerically big, it is good in quality, and a reliable secret order.

Other secret orders of the village are given as follows, recently organized: The Eastern Star, Coming

Home of Ex-representative H. D. Byram.

Young of America, Royal Archates, and one the name of which is not known by the public.

Submitting a few remarks on general information pertaining to Burt county and the state of Nebraska closes this chapter. It would be safe to estimate the population of Burt for 1860 at about 1,000; up to 1870, close to 7,000; 1890, at 11,500, and for 1900, about 20,000.

The population of Nebraska in the middle '50's did not number over 5,000; 1860, about 20,000; 1870, 130,000; 1880, 450,000, and 1890, over a million. The number of school teachers in the state, 1890, was 11,-183, and the number of pupils, 423,126. Total valuation of real and personal property, 1880, over $90,-000,000; per capita, $200.23; 1890, aggregate value, $184,770,000; per capita, $174.49. The number of tons of hay harvested for 1860 was over 24,000 for 1890 something over 3,000,000 tons. Yield of tobacco, 1860, 3,600 pounds; 1880, 57,000 pounds, and 1890, 11,000 pounds. The yield of potatoes for 1860 was 162,000 bushels; 1890, 9,138,000 bushels. Fruit products are as follows: Apples, 1,172,000 bushels; apricots, 223 bushels; cherries, 18,004 bushels; peaches, 19,700 bushels; pears, 1,114, and plums, 15,-800 bushels. Production of cereals: Number of bushels of wheat raised 1860, 147,800; 1890, 10,571,-

000 bushel; oats, 1860, 74,502 bushels; 1890, 43,843,-640 bushels; barley, 1860, 1,100 bushels; 1890, 1,822,-111 bushels; rye, 1860, 12,495 bushels; 1890, 1,085,-083 bushels; corn, 1860, 1,482,000 bushels; 1890, 215,895,996 bushels.

In 1860 there was something over 4,000 head of horses in Nebraska; now the amount will number close to 700,000. In 1860, cattle numbered about 30,-000; now this industry will count close to 20,000,000 head. Sheep numbered in 1860, 2,355 head; for 1890, the average amount was 209,243. Mules in 1860 numbered something over 469 head; 1890, 46,512.

Nebraska's industrial and commercial growth has been rapid and to illustrate, a few are enumerated as follows: Cheese, butter and milk industries for 1890 numbered 58 establishments; 1880, only 21; men's clothing, 1890, 136; 1880, only 28; flour and grist mills up to 1890, 185; confectionery, in 1880, only 4; up to 1890, 18; liquors and malt, 1880, 23; now only 14; tobacco, cigars and cigarettes, 1889, 21 factories; now 84. Printing establishments, 1880, 22; up to 1890, 443 publishing houses. In 1880 there were but two planing mills; 1890, there were 24. All other industries have increased proportionately.

CHAPTER EIGHT.

JUSTICE WILBUR AND HIS ANCIENT DOCKETS—NOTED ITINERANT PREACHER, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN BURT COUNTY—REMINISCENCE OF VALE, A REFORMED GAMBLER—BIOGRAPHIES—FATHER HAMILTON, AND THE ORIGIN OF THE FAMOUS INDIAN RESERVATION—OLD SETTLERS OF BURT AND DOUGLAS COUNTIES—CONCLUSION.

The docket book of Matthew C. Wilber, justice of the peace for the village of Decatur, for the years of 1858 and 1859, is an interesting reminiscence, and a few titles of the cases which he heard before his ancient court are quoted as follows:

"Territory of Nebraska vs. S. B. Griswold. Complaint, selling liquor to Indians. Warrant issued 29th day of June, 1858, and upon affidavit of Thomas Whitty, deposeth and says that Griswold did sell and give intoxicating liquors to a certain half breed in said territory on a prescribed day; therefore Thomas H. Whitacre is here by appointment as special constable to arrest him and bring the body before the court; the writ of execution returned on the 2nd day of July and the said Griswold having been given a

fair and an impartial trial upon the evidence, was found guilty of the charge herein named, and is bound over to the district court in the sum of $500.

"Mike Evans and Thomas Whitty vs. I. C. Jones"; a suit brought by the plaintiff to recover $37.60, price and value of 7,500 shingles, sold and delivered to said defendant. Summons returned May 20th, 1858, and trial heard in town hall; and having weighed the arguments of council for both parties, it is considered by the court, that the defendant recover costs in this behalf. Plaintiffs appeal for a new trial, and in the rehearing, the justice finds for them a judgment against defendant for $37.50, and costs.

"Thomas Holton vs. George Scidmore: A suit brought before this court by plaintiff to recover damages for the wrongful detention of property; and on March 30th, 1859, the summons was returned, and the court proceeded to trial at Brown's hotel. By writ of replevin the goods and chattels were given in custody of the plaintiff by Lorenzo Hobbs, special constable, bond and security according to law having been given in behalf of the plaintiff by Guy Barnum and Silas Leaming; and upon the evidence of the witnesses the court finds that the plaintiff can recover from the defendant one yoke of oxen valued at $85 and costs of within suit. The prosecuting attorney in the cases

cited was George W. Doane, and for the defense, David Collier. Hon. Albert White succeeded Mr. Wilber as justice of the peace, and a few of the cases heard before him are as follows:

"Territory of Nebraska vs. Jacob Snieder." Action in tresspass.

"Perry Owens vs. Adam Kerns." Suit in action for labor performed by plaintiff.

"Territory of Nebraska vs. John Kendall." Information of plaintiff of one M. Owens, says that defendant made an assault upon his person with intent to do bodily injury. Action reduced to a misdemeanor and said Kendall, who pleaded "not guilty," fined for the costs of trial.

"Henry Marsh vs. Charles Blackstone." In which plaintiff demands damage for failure to deliver a certain yoke of oxen. Henry Cline acted as special constable in these cases and served the summons.

In the court of C. Outhwaite, justice of the peace for 1866 and 1867, the following cases were heard:

"M. Evans vs. John Callahan." Replevin suit to recover one red heifer.

"A. B. Fuller vs. Tom Jones." Plaintiff demands $18 for failure to pay board bill, and storage rent.

"Daniel Corhart vs. John Sprague." Complaint,

petit larceny. Many other cases are cited, but lack of space will not allow the enumeration.

To Tekamah belongs the honor of having established the first permanent church organization in Burt county, this notable event taking place in 1858, under the direction of Rev. J. M. Taggart, an itinerant missionary, who laid the corner stones of the now opulent Baptist parish, with the meagre material of eight, but very earnest God-loving souls. Taggart's work began in '56 in the west, his field of religious efforts confined to Missouri river settlements between Plattsmouth and Decatur, conducting his services in school houses, town halls, private homes, and other places he might secure; his mode of travel, on horseback, and some times afoot. Mrs. Ed. Shafer was his first accession to the Tekamah church after its organization by the eight constituents, and Rev. J. P. Hungate was the first resident pastor of that parish, beginning with 1860 and ending with 1864. Much good has emanated from the religious seeds planted by Rev. Taggart in his little congregation so long ago, and today the books of this church will register a membership of over four hundred.

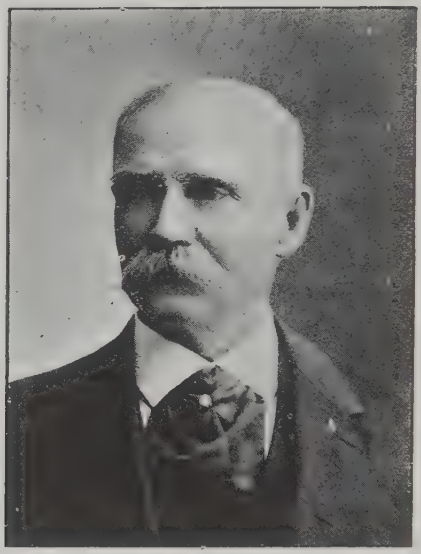
Rev. James Vale, a reformed gambler, better known as "Buckeye," for the reason he was a native of Ohio, was a romantic character of Tieville, the defunct wood-

choppers' settlement situated on the Iowa side of the river, east of Decatur. Vale and his wife, an educated lady, came down the Missouri in a small boat, hailing from a miners' camp up in the mountains; and upon his arrival in the village paroled himself as a minister of the gospel, and the citizens taking him at his word installed him as their pastor, services being held once and twice a week. Ramo, a wood chopper, recognized Vale as a shady character of Montana, and told Jack Lewis, confidentially, that he, as one of a vigilance committee, had waited on Vale and Plummer, then in the liquor business in a mining camp, one dark night; and Vale was ordered to leave the settlement before morning. Plummer, a noted desperado, and a brother-in-law of Vale; was taken by the committee to the nearest tree and hung; his offense, stealing cattle and killing an officer of the law. Vale made his escape from the incensed citizens by jumping in a Makanaw boat and coming down the river. Vale filled the pulpit of the Decatur Methodist church once, and liked by all who knew him, for he was accommodating and pleasant. He learnt John Lewis of Decatur the science of cribbage, and told him he had played many a game for $5 a side. During his residence in Tieville he worked every day with the boys, chopping cord-wood and railroad ties; remained two years and then went

up in Dakota, and it is said he was very successful in his undertakings up there.

The residue of this chapter will be devoted to biographies not already herein mentioned in the work which also includes old and prominent settlers of river towns south of Decatur:

Rev. William Hamilton—Born in Lycuming county, Pennsylvania, August 1st, 1811, on the banks of the beautiful Susquehanna; graduate of Jefferson College, Washington, Pennsylvania, and married Miss Julia Griffin of that city; ordained a preacher, and 1837 appointed by the Presbytery of Northumberland to take charge of the Iowa and Sac mission on Wolf Creek, 25 miles from St. Joe, Missouri; destined by the Indians to die once, but friends of the tribe changed the purpose, and they went across the river and shot another white man. Rev. Hamilton was also attacked by a blacksmith once (whiteman), the fellow making his assault with a pistol in one hand and a bowie knife in the other. Hamilton's fearless defense and great strength saved him. The would-be murderer was afterwards burned at the stake in Texas for killing the prosecuting attorney in court; and in his awful agonies confessed to killing several white men and one Indian. 1853, Rev. Hamilton was transferred to the Omaha Indian mission at Bellevue, continuing



Dr. J. B. Whittier.

in this noble work until the day of his death, which took place in the village of Decatur a few years ago, the victim of a stroke of paralysis. In 1856 the United States government contributed $65,000 and the Presbyterian board of foreign missions $15,000, and under the supervision of Rev. Hamilton the famous Indian mission was built on the Omaha reservation, situated on a picturesque elevation overlooking the Missouri River. The rock for the mission was quarried out not far from the site and the other building material shipped up from Fort Plattsmouth; and upon its completion, Hamilton moved up and became the superintendent of the school. A few years later he lost his wife, who was fatally injured by being thrown from a buggy. The old mission is interesting for the historical atmosphere which surrounds it. It was here in 1843 that Big Elk died from an attack of smallpox, also carrying off two hundred of his choicest warriors. It was here also that the Omahas met the warlike Sioux in battle, and today on the ridges will be found a scattering of bones, canny tell-tales of these bloody conflicts. A few old "chaches" remain, secret excavations in the ground, used by the ancient traders to hide their goods in during the wild skirmishes between quarreling tribes of pugnacious Indians. 1869 Rev. Hamilton was united in marriage to Miss Etta Hunt-

ing, a school teacher of the mission, and to them have been born three children, Lotta, Julia, and John, all of whom are living. Hamilton's missionary work among the Omahas was effective. Fifty years ago this people bowed to the morning sun and gave up their offerings to the stars; today their reservation is dotted with school houses and Christian churches, and now they read the same books, talk the same language and worship the same God the white man does. About the time of this great man's death the mission was abandoned, and a few years ago it was sold to Ed. Farley of Bancroft and Walter Diddock of Omaha agency for the consideration of $150.

When the Northwestern laid its tracks across the state of Iowa, Mat Hamlin started with it from Illinois, in the employ of the Western Mail and Stage Company as a carrier. It involved considerable time to complete this mammoth piece of railroad engineering, and as the company proceeded in its extension of terminals, Mat transported the mails from the point arrived at on to the next inland station, and the first driver out of Council Bluffs after that road had reached the Missouri River. Then followed up John I. Blair's Sioux City and Pacific, same manner, and drove the last four-horse team carrying the mail into Sioux City. Mat drove stage in the Blackhills, also

conductor of mails between Beatrice, Nebraska, and Maryville, Kansas, distance of forty miles. He was the veteran mail carrier of the West. A kind and generous man, but a hard drinker; careless, and not having provided for old age, sickness forced him to the Burt county poor farm in the summer of 1900, where he died the following winter.

Dr. J. B. Whittier—Born in Newhampshire, and a graduate of Dartmouth College, where Daniel Webster studied law. Dr. Whittier is also a cousin of John Greenleaf Whittier, America's famous poet; 1863 resided at Washington, and appointed by President Lincoln paymaster in the United States army, headquarters at New Orleans, remaining in that city and this service until the close of the rebellion; moved to Chicago and took up the study of medicine and graduated with honors from Hanneman Medical College, the largest of its kind in the world. After completing his course, hung his shingle out, and received a "night call," traveling many miles in the cold to wait on his patient; administered to the sick, but received no pay and no thanks. This treatment discouraged the doctor so much that he abandoned the practice of medicine, and he went west and engaged in the mining business in Colorado for several years. From this state he removed to Decatur, Nebraska, bought some farms and

interested himself in agriculture and stock raising. One of the original stock owners of the First National Bank of Tekamah, and owns a vast amount of real estate in Kansas. His farms in Burt county are elaborately improved, arranged for comfort and convenience, and the doctor has established the reputation for himself of being one of the kindest and most considerate landlords in the county. In the city of Lincoln, on the 20th day of February, 1895, Dr. Whittier and Miss Ida Stanton were united in the holy bonds of matrimony, the bride one of Burt county's fairest and sweetest daughters. Ever since this delightful event this happy couple have made their home in the village of Decatur. Dr. Whittier is the composer of a host of creditable pieces of verse, and certainly belongs to the cycle of muses; but reticent and modest in these efforts, it is doubtful if the public will ever have the pleasure of reading them. It is only known by a very few that he is entitled to a relationship to the late deceased Queen Victoria, and the causes which have led to this distinction are quite romantic. The relationship begins during the reign of George III. of England, when Sarah, his sister, eloped with the king's weaver, whose name was William Nutt. After the young couple were secretly married, they fled to this country and then disinherited by the royal family. In

time the king's anger softened, and extending his forgiveness, Sarah and her husband were re-owned, and being in straightened circumstances, money was sent to them in a strong iron box, at intervals, by King George; and later a deed to the Nutt place, situated in Newhampshire, was given James by the king, then the royal park in America, of which Nutt had been appointed royal keeper. Sarah, or Mrs. Nutt's, daughter was the mother of Dr. Whittier's mother, or Dr. Whittier's great-grandmother, which establishes Dr. Whittier as a fourth cousin of Edward, the present king of England, and his mother a third cousin; and her mother a first cousin of George IV. and William IV. of England, sons of George III; George IV. succeeding his father to the throne, and William IV. succeeding his brother.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ashley left England October 19th, 1860, and arrived in Dakota City November 19th, following the river up from St. Joe with an ox team which Mr. Ashley purchased in that City, St. Joe at that time being the railroad terminus. They arrived in Dakota City on a Monday evening and the candle lights were burning in the windows. Here Mr. Ashley met his brother James, then the village blacksmith, and he went to work in his shops. February 5th, 1861, the young couple moved to Decatur,

coming down on the Iowa side of the river on account of the heavy snow, and Mr. Ashley engaged in the blacksmith business for himself. Later he traded his team and wagon to Billy Points for his shanty, fifty acres of land down on Silver Creek and $10 in money. When Mr. and Mrs. Ashley began housekeeping all they had was a cheap cook stove, four old chairs, a borrowed bedstead well stocked with bedbugs, three cups and saucers, three plates, and a limited amount of tin eating tools and ware. Mr. Hobbs in one of his trips to Omaha brought back with him two lamps, the first to enter the village, and Mr. and Mrs. Ashley secured one of them. Mr. Ashley's blacksmith shop was a success and he drew patronage from West Point, Washington county, and distant settlements in Iowa. In the autumn of '69 he moved down on his farm and remained until the spring of '72, when he received his appointment as government blacksmith for the Omahas. Resided here twelve years, doing all kinds of department work, acting in the capacity of a sub-agent. The Omahas became much attached to Mr. and Mrs. Ashley, and in one of their councils extracted a promise from them they would not leave the reservation of their accord, and offered them land. They were the only white people among the Omahas at this time. They returned to Decatur,

however, and conducted a hotel for several years, which they purchased in 1879. Under President Harrison's administration, Mr. Ashley received his appointment as U. S. Indian agent for the Omahas and Winnebagos, and upon expiration of his office returned to Decatur; his present home a dwelling costing $2,500, with modern equipments. Mr. and Mrs. Ashley have been life-long members of the Methodist church and established a Sunday School in Decatur early in the summer of '61. In this early day, Rev. Amsbury of Dakota City came down every two weeks and held services. They have two living children, Thomas R., born in England, 1855, and Eva Louise, born in Burt county, September 13th, 1869, and who is now the wife of Hon. Chas. P. Mathewson, U. S. Indian agent for the Winnebagoes and Omahas. Thomas R. is a pioneer school boy of Nebraska, a graduate in law and one of the foremost lawyers before the Burt county bar. He has attended every republican convention in the county since he was twenty-one, and an active member in the political field. Married Miss Alice Byram of Decatur, September 28th, 1880; ceremony performed by Rev. Sloan, and to them has been born one child, Mabel A., November 6th, 1881. Mr. Ashley has been offered nominations,

but always declined. Controls 1,700 acres of reservation land, most of which is under cultivation.

Captain S. T. Leaming was born in Schoharri county, New York, and educated for a civil engineer. 1833, at the age of four, moved to La Porte, Indiana, and in 1852 crossed the plains to California, returning in 1855 and engaged in railroad work in Iowa; and in the spring of '57 made his home in Decatur. 1859 elected to the Territorial legislature; appointed by the government to allot farms to the Omahas and Winnebagoes, the former being alloted in 1863 and the latter in 1864; Major Painter agent for the Omahas and Major White for the Winnebagoes. County surveyor of Burt county for two years; 1862 enlisted in Company I, Second Nebraska, Hon. Robert W. Furnas his colonel, and Hon. John Taff, a well known politician, his major; 1863 promoted lieutenant and later received his commission as captain; 1889 moved to Milwaukee, and manager of a medical institute. Here he married his second wife, a Scotch lady of refinement and high social tastes. Returned to his Decatur home in the spring of '97; owns one of the finest walnut groves in Nebraska, twelve and a half acres, and Dr. Miller of Omaha, authority on tree culture, estimates their value at $1,100 per acre. The captain has three boys and one girl by his first wife; Edward,

the oldest, is in California; Collier D. is railroading in Wisconsin, and Silas is studying law at the Madison University, Milwaukee; Anna, who married Charlie Shafer, a Tekamah boy, resides in Los Angeles, California; Charlotte M., a step-daughter, age 11, attends school at home, and H. E. J. is the baby, and does just as he pleases.

Hon. Frank Welch was born on the historic ground of Bunker Hill, February 10th, 1835, and located in Decatur in the fall of '57. A graduate of the high schools of Boston, he chose the profession of civil engineering and entrusted with several important surveys in the West, and identified himself with the progress of Nebraska until the day of his death, which took place at Neligh, Nebraska, September 4th, 1874, the victim of a paralytic stroke. He was attending a political convention, and expired while sitting in a chair. Although away from home, he was surrounded in these last sad moments by a circle of warm friends. Mr. Welch was prominent in Nebraska politics. He was a representative of the Territorial legislature, and in 1865 elected president of the upper house, and in 1871 appointed register of the land office at West Point. In 1872 he secured the nomination for member of congress and after a spirited contest elected by an overwhelming majority. Upon the announcement

of his death, the United States legislature adjourned a day, to pay tribute to his memory, Mr. Majors, his successor, delivering an impressive memorial, also did Mr. Sapp of Iowa, Mr. Patterson of Colorado, besides a number of eastern congressmen who were intimate friends. Frank Welch was a man of fine social powers, popular and ambitious. He was united in marriage to Miss Elizabeth Butts of Hudson, New York, in 1863, and shortly after the occurrence of this union he engaged in the mercantile business, which was not a financial success. The village of Decatur remembers Mr. Welch as her ancient postmaster, merchant, member of the town council, and village recorder. He was a useful man because he was trustworthy. One of his most important surveys took place in 1857, when he run the line of a projected railroad across the state of Iowa; and had the honor of representing the largest congressional district in the United States, the solitary representative in the lower house from a state embracing seventy-five thousand square miles. Earnest and faithful for the welfare of his constituents, it is thought the strain hastened or at least contributed to his finis, which cut down a strong and noble man in the flower-time of his life. Frank Welch will not be forgotten.

Calvin Root was born September 9th, 1806, in Le-

banon, New York; and married Miss Almira M. Wilcox on June 23rd, 1829, in Columbia county, same state. Emigrated from Wisconsin in the summer of '61 with his wife and two children, Nevada and Frank; George and Alice Perry also accompanying him. The trip was made overland, George Perry riding his pony. Mr. Root was a carpenter by trade, and in 1864 appointed miller for the Omaha Indian mission. In 1876 he was appointed supervisor of the government grist and saw mill at the same place, and it was here that he died, January 10th, 1882. Mr. Root crossed the plains to California in company with Decatur Young, father of S. T. Young, in 1852. The journey was made by wagon and it took three months. They were gone three years. In the possession of his daughter, Mrs. Stillman, is a small oblong wooden box which Mr. Root made for his sweetheart to keep her love letters in. It is a quaint little relic, full of fond memories, and about seventy-five years old.

John Lewis was born in Westchester, New York, March 18th, 1844, and married Miss Mary A. Kelso of Allegheny, Pennsylvania, at Sioux City, September 4th, 1871, ceremony performed by Father McNulty. This union was blessed with three living children, born as follows: William R., March 12th, 1873; Anna M., January 6th, 1879; Mary Evalyn, January 19th, 1881.

Mr. Lewis came from Wisconsin to Nebraska with a party of homeseekers in the spring of '66; worked for Robt. Moore of Tieville for several years, and one of his foremen. Entered on a piece of land on the "Divide," and sold out later. Member of the village board of Decatur for many years; also served as township assessor for several terms. With his partner, Mr. Coyle, the first to operate a steam ferry on the Missouri river in the early seventies.

George W. Doane—Born in Circleville, Ohio, December 16th, 1824; graduate of law and eminent barrister of Nebraska; politics, democrat; and religion, Presbyterian; located in Decatur in 1857; 1860 removed to Calhoun, then the central point for legal transactions. In the summer of '57 elected district attorney for the Third judicial district; elected to the Territorial legislature 1858; October 25th, 1859, married Miss Emily R. Greenhow of Vincennes, Indiana, and this venerable couple are now enjoying the love and companionship of five living children, Cora, Guy, William, Daisy, and George W.; 1862 moved east and practiced law in Cincinnati, and 1864 returned and made his home in Omaha; 1865 elected prosecuting attorney for Douglas county; member of the city council 1868, and 1880 elected to the state senate; nominee for congress on the democratic ticket and defeated

by a very small majority. Now owns a few lots in village of Decatur. Mr. Doane is a pioneer of Nebraska who accomplished much good for his state and the commonwealth. Starting out a poor boy, his stock in trade, rugged health and grim determination, he has lived to see his gray hairs covered with garlands and the civic wreath of honor.

F. E. Lange—Born in Saxony, and emigrated to America 1852; cabinet-maker by trade; occupation, farmer; non-religious, and in politics, independent. Postmaster of Golden Springs for many years. Mr. Lange came to Burt county in the spring of '55 from St. Joe, Missouri, and homesteaded a piece of land which represents his present home; a wealthy farmer; served several terms as county commissioner. In an early day an attempt was made to lay out a town near Golden Springs to be known as "Central Bluffs." A store and some dwellings were erected—but the boom was not popular and the proposed city soon passed into oblivion.

George E. Atwater—A native of La Porte, Indiana, came to Decatur with $25 in his pocket; engaged in the mercantile business and built up a large trade; chairman of the village board 1881. Now a real estate dealer and proprietor of a furniture store in Yankton, South Dakota.

Walter Lewis, an English doctor, left his home in 1856, and attired in a broadcloth suit, high silk tile, white gloves, and a stylish walking stick, crossed the state of Iowa with an ox team, arriving in Council Bluffs on the fourth day of July, a picture of woe, his dainty wardrobe a complete wreck; but the spirit of the man was undaunted, and going direct to the county clerk's office, he registered, declaring his intention of becoming an American citizen. Persuaded by friends, the young doctor located in Monroe, a small settlement near Columbus, his residence and office a dug-out. One day while away on professional business, a roving band of mischevious Pawnees entered his domain and stole Lewis' bedding, provisions, and clothing. Discouraged by such treatment, he moved to Omaha, and one of the first to practice medicine in that city when it was but a mere village. Dr. Lewis has been a continuous resident of Decatur for over twenty-five years and a practitioner of medicine for over fifty years. Married Miss Carter of Burt county; owns a cozy piece of residence property, and independent financially, religiously, and politically.

Andrew J. Best.—Born in New Philadelphia, Ohio, August 13th, 1833; educated for the ministry, and resigned a charge to enlist in the Union army. Wounded in the battle of "Stone River," and receives a pen-

sion of $12 per month; 1870 made his home in Burt county and married for the second time, his wife, the widow of Judge White, the pioneer justice of Decatur. The hardships and discouragements Mr. Best received in the war disheartened him, and he has never preached the gospel of religion since.

George J. White was born in New York City, February 14th, 1844, and married Miss Susan A. Lewis of Westchester, New York, in the village of Tieville, February 8th, 1871; and to this pioneer couple have been born the following children: James P., February 2nd, 1872; Catherine M., July 18th, 1874; Elizabeth, June 10th, 1881; Lewis B., August 24th, 1883; Mary J., February 19th, 1885, and Margurette M., May 26th, 1889. Mr. White was mess cook on Captain Overton's steamboat when she sunk while on her way from Sioux City to Omaha; then went to work as waiter in Judge Peak's hotel at Onawa; also drove stage between Decatur and Tieville; United States volunteer in the civil war and receives a pension of $12 a month. Bought 120 acres of land on the "Divide," but sold out later and moved to Decatur. Mrs. White was Tieville's school teacher previous to her marriage. Mr. White is commander of the local G. A. R., and has filled many of the local public offices of the village and precinct.

Edwin Higley was born in Onondagua county, New York, December 24th, 1825, and married Miss Louisa White of Waukesha, Wis., in 1846; and to them were born three children: Herman, Frank E., and Addie F. Enlisted in Union army at Waukesha 1862; and taken prisoner in Arkansas between Pine Bluff and Little Rock; helped take Mobile in 1865, and in the siege of the Spanish Fort; discharged at Brownville, Texas, same year, and July, '66, moved to Decatur, and receives a pension of $12 a month. On July 2nd, 1862, he married Mrs. Susie H. Thompson, a widow lady of Decatur, and in their comfortable home they have gathered around them a valuable collection of family relics, such as Mrs. Higley's mother's rocking chair, a hundred years old; an old-fashioned tea pot; some old oil paintings, valued at $500; a pair of candle sticks with a tray and snuffers, 150 years old, and a black silk quilt, many of the pieces from the scrap tapestry of the royal palaces of Europe.

Frank O. Y'Dean was born in Sweden, November 20th, 1847, and married Miss Charlotte Isaacs of the same country at Linskiping, December 31st, 1872, and to this couple have been born four children: Mary L., August 8th, 1873; John H., April 2nd, 1875; Emil F., May 23rd, 1880, and David J., June 23rd, 1885. Mr. Y'Deen came to this country in 1881, a poor man,

first working as a section hand on a railroad near Lincoln. Then he moved to Decatur and adopted farming, being eminently successful, and is now in very comfortable circumstances. His daughter, Miss Mary, was a member of the first graduating class of the Decatur high schools. Mr. Y'Deen was also a sharpshooter in the army of Sweden and won several medals for excellent marksmanship.

Azaziah B. Fuller was born in Erie county, Pennsylvania, December 9th, 1821; his wife, Miss Mary Crawford, was born in the same county, September 27th, 1827, and they were united in marriage in Erie county, November 19th, 1846; and to them were given the following children: Ella G., October 9th, 1847; Helen G., October 15th, 1849; Maryannetta, June 29th, 1851; Lizzie, November 9th, 1855; Kate, February 25th, 1858; Clyde H., September 16, 1861; May C., September 24th, 1866, and Harriet M., July 23rd, 1868. Mr. Fuller was one of Decatur's earliest and foremost citizens, always alive to the interests of his town. So much has been said of this venerable pioneer in preceding chapters that a repetition would be superfluous. He was a large contractor and builder, and most of the dwellings in Decatur of an early day were built by him. He entered into contract to furnish ties for the Union Pacific; built Decatur's fine

school house; erected buildings for the government on the Omaha and Winnebago reservations; also on other reserves; and always to the front in all public enterprises. His fondest hope was to secure a railroad, but he did not live to see his wish realized. He now sleeps in peace in the village cemetery and his widow is a prominent and influential member of the Episcopal church. Mrs. Fuller's estate is a large one, consisting of 765 acres of land, 28 town lots, 2 fine dwellings, and one store building, also a block of lots in Cedar Rapids, Nebraska.

Charles B. Barlow is an Englishman by birth and came to Paterson, N. J., 1861, and engaged in the silk business. In 1865 he returned to England on a visit, leaving New York on the day President Lincoln was assassinated, but did not hear the news until his arrival in the harbor of Liverpool. Present in Hyde Park, London, when Prince Albert and the queen bid their soldiers farewell previous to their departure for the Crimean war. Also a guest at a public reception given by the lord mayor of London in honor of the Duke of Wellington, who came into the hall with Queen Victoria leaning on his arm; and during the evening the queen presented to the great general a handsome sword as a token of honor for his valient services rendered in behalf of his country. Mr. Barlow also en-

joys the distinguished privilege of having presented his courtesies in person to the beloved queen and conversing with her. When he came to this country he was a poor boy, but by persistent industry and economy has emassed a small fortune. He was united in marriage to a Miss Choyce of Illinois, and this union was blessed with four children: Rhoda, Charles, Emma, and John, who are now well-to-do residents of Nebraska. Mr. Barlow had the misfortune to lose his estimable companion a few years ago, and she was laid to rest in the village cemetery. Mr. Barlow owns one of the largest general stores in Decatur, some valuable town property, besides a good farm west of town. In religion he is a Methodist and in politics a strong republican.

Charles R. Dakin.—Born in city of Concord, Massachusetts; 1833 made his home in Geneva, New York, and in 1835 moved to Cleveland and clerked in a store; fall of 1839 emigrated to Wakesha, Wisconsin, and engaged in the mercantile business, and 1863 took up his residence on a farm near Decatur, and in 1875 established himself as a banker in the village. Served as treasurer of the school board of Decatur. Died many years ago and the remains interred in the village cemetery.

D. C. Griffin.—Born in Schoharri county, New

York, September 22nd, 1824; occupation, farmer; religion, Methodist, and politics, democrat; has an absolute title to 560 acres of improved farming land in Burt county; named in honor of the founder of the New York canal, Governor DeWitt Clinton. Married Miss C. C. Johnson at Elyria, Ohio, October 14th, 1846. Mr. Griffin and his estimable wife moved to Decatur from La Porte, Indiana, shortly after the close of the civil war. His residence property is the old Parks place, remodeled at a cost of $3,000, and a typical down-eastern home, surrounded by one of the prettiest lawns in the county. To this aged couple five children have been given: Charles, Frank, Earl, George, and Mary Frances, three of whom are dead. The two surviving members are Charles and Frank. Charles is a prominent insurance agent located at Lincoln, and Frank is one of Burt county's foremost stock feeders and raisers.

Cass Cramer.—Born in Springfield, Pennsylvania, January 27th, 1835. When 17 years old enlisted in the Union army. Wounded in a skirmish with Mosley, the rebel gorrilla, in the spring of '65 at Hamilton, Virginia. After the war located in Richardson county, Nebraska, and drove a freight team; interested in a cattle ranch in Knuckles county; cow-puncher on Laramie plains. Identified with Thurston county stock

men for many years; owns a good farm in Burt county, besides town property; a free born republican; religion, liberal; and receives a pension of $8 per month. Still lives in single bliss, but not averse to the charms of woman.

Calvin C. Bacon.—Born Henderson Harbor, New York, June 11th, 1838; free thinker and independent democrat. For many years a sailor on the big lakes and the St. Lawrence River. By trade a plasterer and brick mason. 1869 crossed the Missouri at Omaha and receiving an invitation from his brother, came to Decatur, and one of the pleasing landmarks of the village. A poor man when he arrived in Burt county; now owns a good farm, besides some valuable town property. Had a narrow escape from death once by falling from a 14-foot barn and confined to his bed for several weeks. Although a bachelor, he is a lover of womankind, still prefers to live alone.

E. D. Canfield.—Born in Essex county, New York, May 24th, 1828, near the famous fort which Ethan Allan with three men captured from the English in "the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress." When 21 he went to Wakesha, Wisconsin, and clerked several years. Married Miss Sophie Root of that city, October 17th, 1852; and this union was blessed with two children: Clara Belle, Octo-

ber 17th, 1855, and Willis H., January 29th, 1862. In 1858 Mr. Canfield and his wife emigrated to Nebraska and made their home in Decatur; Mrs. Canfield the first school teacher in the village. All the money they had on hand when they arrived was a fifty-cent piece. Mr. Canfield taught school among the Yankton Sioux for three years and a half; 1860 he and Mrs. Root contracted to build twenty-five school houses for the Winnebagoes; also entered into contracts with Mr. Fuller for the construction of some dwellings at Omaha agency. In the year of 1881, Mr. Canfield lost his wife through a serious illness, and on May 2nd, 1883, married Miss Cora E. Blue, one of Burt county's estimable young ladies; 1884 became a member of the Decatur bank; member of the village board one year; also served one term as justice of the peace—his only official business to unite in marriage Mr. and Mrs. Daniel E. Morley. Mr. Canfield used to take pride in stating: "The Canfields represent a large family, but I never knew one to be in jail, and neither have I ever known one to be rich. This venerable pioneer passed away in the spring of 1901, and the remains interred in the village cemetery. He was a direct republican and a strong Episcopalian. His estate valued at about $12,000.

Seymore T. Preston.—Born in DeKalb, New York,

August 25th, 1824; Episcopalian, and politics, republican; owns a good farm and some town property. Taught school near the place of his birth and drove stage in the city of Boston. Located in Decatur 1858, and a pioneer plasterer. Married Miss Mary M. Brown of Dakota county, 1860, and they have three children living: Emma, Ida, and Lettie, the latter who is now one of Decatur's popular milliners.

Chas. A. Darling was born in La Porte, Indiana, July 9th, 1857, and married Miss Laura Blackstone of Burt county, February 4th, 1882, at Tekamah. A prominent real estate and land agent at Lyons; taught school in Burt county in an early day. His wife's parents are old settlers, locating on the Blackbird in 1859. While living here, Mr. Blackstone was raided by the Indians, taking half of his provisions, some spoons, and half of the top of a small cherry wood table. The table is still kept by the family as a relic. Mr. Darling attended the Decatur schools when a boy, and clerked for George Atwater.

Pete Rafferty, from Wisconsin, came to this country in '66; engaged in general work near Onawa for several years. Married Miss Gray of Decatur. Farmed on the "Divide," near the Blackbird, and then bought out the Tom Whitelaw homestead for $300, his present home, situated a few miles west of town.

Peter Coyle and Jerry Carter planted the first trees in the village of Decatur in 1857, hired by the town-site company. A few of these landmarks yet remain, splendid specimens of their specie (cottonwood) and the power of time.

Silas P. Byram was born in Morristown, New York, October 12th, 1824; and married Miss Sarah Meacham of Newton, New Jersey, at Newark, October 31st, 1850, and to this venerable couple the following children have been born: Helen J., Henry D., George M., Alice E., Evangeline N., and Eugene L., now well-to-do men and women, successful on life's highway. Mr. Byram was quite wealthy and upon his death a few years ago the property was divided by mutual agreement.

James Ashley.—Born June 22nd, 1820, town of Northwell, England; bid farewell to his native soil summer of 1852, and six weeks on the ocean, engaging passage on a sailing vessel. Lived in the city of Brooklyn and Chicago until 1857, when he moved to Dakota City and opened a blacksmith shop. On July 24th, 1859, he was united in marriage to Miss Garner of Dakota county, and to them have been born the following children: John, George, Jennie, Fred and Charles. George died August 1st, 1880, of inflammatory rheumatism; Fred is a prosperous hardware mer-

chant of Decatur; Charles, one of Decatur's popular mercantile dealers, and John is now serving his second term as treasurer of Burt county, a man who has won the honor and esteem of his associates and friends. Jennie married Mr. Charles Maryott of Pender, a wel-to-do and leading lumber merchant of that city. Mrs. Ashley laughingly tells it, the first time she met her husband was at a Methodist church meeting in a country school house in Dakota county, and inquired of a lady acquaintance, "Who was that dandy well-dressed little fellow who sat in front of me tonight?" "Why, don't you know?" her friend exclaimed, "why, that's Jim Ashley, the little Englishman, and our new village blacksmith up to Logan." It was surely love at first sight, for Mr. Ashley made similar inquiries in regard to Miss Garner; the young couple soon became acquainted, which ended in a very happy marriage. Mr. Ashley located 160 acres on the river flat, and a man from Omaha, who had the reputation of being a tough character, threatened to shoot the young blacksmith if he did not vacate the premises. But the plucky Englishman was not so easily frightened. Instead of going, he remained, made some improvements, built a house, proved up and sold out for $800. Through the influence of Agent George B. Graft, 1860, Mr. Ashley received his

appointment as government blacksmith for the Omahas; 1864 he moved to Decatur and bought a half interest in his brother Robert's blacksmith shop; later moved back to the agency, remaining seven years; last two as post trader. In the summer of '74 purchased Warner's hardware store at Decatur and moved his family down, and the house he lives in now was built by Adam Reems, the first saw mill man of Decatur, and a fifty-niner. Mr. Ashley's oldest boy, John, was the first white boy born on the reservation, and Jennie Bent, daughter of Rev. Bent, superintendent of the Omaha mission in 1860, the first white girl. Mr. Ashley has filled most of the local offices pertaining to the village of Decatur, without his seeking, and a very quiet, unpretentious man, who is beloved by his neighbors for his kindness and benevolence.

Rev. Charles Cross was born in Genesee county, New York, March 19th, 1822; educated for the ministry and ordained at Greencastle, Indiana, 1854. Rev. Cross was married to Miss Wealthy Cross at Pulaski, N. Y., Oct. 22, 1842; and this loving companion was taken from him by the angel of death on April 3d, 1891, at Herman, Neb. Graduate of Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania. President McKinley was a graduate of this college; also Doctor Edward Sears of Decatur. Rev.

Cross was stationed at such places as Petersburg, Washington, and New Albany, some of the best appointments in the conference. Came to Nebraska in 1871, locating near Herman, one year before the incorporation of that town. Superintendent of Washington county from '73 to '77; and solemnized more marriages and preached more funeral sermons than any other minister in the county. Also officiated at the funeral of Henry Fontenelle, a noted pioneer of Nebraska. On September 22nd, 1894, Rev. Cross was united in marriage to Mrs. Jane Clough, a pioneer widow lady of Burt county. Mrs. Clough was born in Victor, Ontario county, New York, March 26th 1829, and located at Golden Springs, Nebraska, in 1866. Mr. Cross has retired from active service in the church; broad in his views and beloved by his neighbors. He and his estimable wife are comfortably located in Decatur, and the owners of a very pleasant and inviting little fireside.

James E. Boyd was born in the county of Tyrone, Ireland; ex-governor of Nebraska, and former mayor of Omaha, and became a resident of this city in 1856, applying himself to the carpenter's profession; his brother, John M., was a co-worker. Interested in stock raising for several years near Gibbons, Nebraska, then an open prairie; proprietor of a merchan-

dise store at Kearney City; and 1866 accepted grading contracts from the Union Pacific; 1868 returned to Omaha; elected a member of the first state legislature, while a resident of Buffalo county. Promoter of Omaha's city gas works; and in the winter of 1869 organized the Omaha and Northwestern and, its first president, and the road built to Blair. Extensively interested in cattle ranches out west; one of the founders of the Central National Bank of Omaha, 1870, and 1880 elected a member of the board of aldermen. Mr. Boyd was a resident of Kanesville, just across the river, for several years previous to his location in Omaha.

J. J. Brown, from New York, located in the city of Omaha in the spring of 1856 and opened a merchandise store, and in after years established himself in the wholesale business. A wide-awake citizen and always took a prominent part in public enterprises beneficial to the city.

Samuel R. Brown, a native of Ohio, identified himself with the city of Omaha in 1854, and grew up with the village. Engaged in mining a few years in Colorado. A pioneer who was a jack of all trades in an early day; freighting across the plains, carpentering, store keeper, land dealer, miner and banker; and suf-

fered many hardships in his struggles for success and wealth.

James T. Allen, a young man from Pontiac, Michigan; 1856 came to Bellevue and opened a hotel, the largest in the territory at that time; 1858 moved to Omaha and conducted the Herndon House for several years; 1866 emigrated to Julesburg and established a railroad eating house. Later superintendent of tree culture for Union Pacific; prominent pioneer of Nebraska.

James H. Baldwin, a New York boy, located in Omaha in 1856; employed by the government shortly after his arrival to build bridges between Omaha and Running Water; 1860 went to Colorado and engaged in the mining business, and after three years' experience, returned to his old home and interested himself in the wood industry, and emerged into a professional house-mover, also dealing in real estate.

Jirah P. Page.—Born in Herkimer county, New York, March 1st, 1847; came to Decatur the night before the morning the Brown Hotel burned to the ground. Carpenter by trade; married Miss Mary C. Moore, a native of Troy, Ohio, April 16th, 1867, at the city of Olena, Ohio; father of five living children, Ida, Ada, Maud, Lewis, and Lyle. Enlisted in the Union army when a mere boy. At one time deputy

U. S. marshal, member of village board, and has held other offices. Mr. and Mrs. Page are veteran restauranteurs of Decatur, having been engaged in this business for over twenty years.

Dr. Louis Phillip Ross, a native of Newton, West Virginia, born June 27, 1857, and married Miss Clara Wolf, of same state, May 30th, 1878. Graduate of medicine, Louisville Medical College, Louisville, Kentucky; self-made man, and now prominent doctor of Burt county. Has filled several prominent official medical appointments; taught school eleven years in the states of Kansas, Minnesota, and West Virginia, prior to his study of medicine. In politics a direct democrat and a recognized leader in his party. Dr. Ross has a fine home and his family enjoy life.

Byron L. Wilder was born in Sandy Creek, New York, August 12th, 1841; Miss Chloe Snyder, Sandy Creek, same state, August 9, 1844. They were married in Sandy Creek by Rev. C. L. Dunning, February 22, 1871; and to them have been born four children, Maud, March, 1872; Stanton, February 28th, 1876; Edward, February 2nd, 1878, and James, April 19, 1880. Mr. Wilder came to Decatur March 7, 1881; occupation, farmer; member Methodist church, and politics, republican. Died April 17, 1890. His

widow owns one residence and fourteen lots and values personal property at $3,000.

Charles O. Freeman was born in Kalamazoo county, Michigan, September 4th, 1867; and when six months old his parents moved to Nebraska, their final home, one mile northeast of Craig. Herded cattle in his young days; then engaged in the poultry business; and when about 20 went on the road as a peddler. Came to Decatur in 1893, with one trunk full of goods—now owns one of the largest general stores in the town. He is the seventh son of twelve children. Married Miss Mina Tallman of Scott county, Iowa, and to them have been born one girl, December 18th, 1901.

John Rasch, a German, born on the banks of the River Rhine, a stove moulder by trade; fought for the Union cause in the civil war, and entered upon a soldier's claim in Burt county in 1872; mustered out of army at Madison, Wisconsin, and receives a pension of $6 a month.

W. S. Page, a New Yorker by birth, arrived in Decatur March 1st, 1871; village blacksmith; also land agent; homesteaded 160 acres of land; and justice of the peace for twelve years successfully. An ardent spiritualist. Died January 5th, 1895.

Levi L. Darling is a native of Chesterfield, Mass.,

nad made his debut in Decatur 1866. A prominent factor in its youthful history; now lives in Alberta, Canada. A farmer, with broad religion, but strong populist. His sons and daughters are wel-to-do people of the county.

Hon. Robt. W. Furnas was born in Miami county, Ohio, and in his youth learned the art of printing; and when 23 years old, editor of the "Times," Troy, Ohio. In March, 1856, located in Brownville, Nebraska, his present home, and established the "Nebraska Advertiser." Elected to Territorial legislature, and served one year as clerk. When the civil war broke out enlisted in Union army and commissioned by President Lincoln as colonel, and organized an Indian brigade of three regiments; and in Gen. Sully's expedition against the Sioux. 1867 he was appointed U. S. Indian agent for the Omahas, accomplishing much good for this tribe, learning them the rudimentary principles of agriculture; 1872 he was elected governor of Nebraska by the republican party. Mr. Furnas has occupied all of the high offices of the state and eminent in secret societies. To him belongs the honor of having organized the first school board in the Territory of Nebraska, and of having presided over the first educational convention. He has been an active advocate of tree culture and has accomplished

much good in this direction for Nebraska, converting barren prairies into valuable tracts of stately forests. Mr. Furnas married Miss Mary McComas of Cincinnati, in 1845, and this union was blessed with five children. In recent years he lost his wife and now has taken another estimable companion. This pioneer's life is made up of good deeds, and for these acts of merit and unselfishness the commonwealth has crowned its leader with the civic wreath of public honor.

Sam Orchard of Omaha is a native of Washington county, Indiana, and located in Nebraska in 1855. He is one of the oldest living pioneers of the state; the first man to import potatoes out of Nebraska, a boatload billed for St. Louis, paying 25 cents a bushel for them—and made some money in the speculation. On the second shipment, however, he lost money and Orchard quit the business disgusted. In an early day Omaha's leading carpet and furniture dealer; during the rebellion, assistant provost marshal, also surveyor of customs; in '72 resigned latter charge to accept office of assistant postmaster, acting in this capacity until 1877. Married Miss Crawford of Omaha, 1865, and this union was blessed with two children, Charles C. and Mabel G. Mr. Orchard has been deeply afflicted, having lost the sweet companionship of a loving wife and the devoted affection of a charming

daughter and a promising son. Mr. Orchard makes his home at the Karbach hotel in Omaha; a man of kindly disposition, beloved by all who know him, and a typical pioneer of Nebraska. Although time has turned his hair to gray and death has robbed him of his brightest jewels, his faith in a Divine Providence is inviolable, and he lives in the daily walks of his life a patient and God-loving man, a true representative of the noble characters who made it possible for Nebraska to become the glorious and prosperous state she is today.

A second cousin to Logan Fontenelle, the historical leader of the Omaha Indians, the author's prerogative to record a truthful sketch of this man ought to be unquestionable. Mere conjecture or idle imagination have been the sources of information used by many writers in regard to his life and tragic death and accurate data up to this time has not been presented. Logan Fontenelle was a Nebraska boy by birth, born near the little village of Bellevue in the year 1821; and instructed in the rudiments of education by Father De Smit at Kansas City; a small portion of his youth was passed in St. Louis, and he crossed the plains with his father, locating at Fort Laramie, where Mr. Fontenelle conducted a trader's post. But most of Logan's boyhood was spent in Bellevue, taking advan-

tage of the mission schools, and growing up into man's estate among the Indians; a favorite with them, and upon maturity, for his bravery and daring feats, elected chief of the Omahas. Logan Fontenelle was a half-breed; his father a Frenchman and his mother an Indian woman. In stature he was slightly below the medium, straight as an arrow, dark piercing eyes, and long straight black hair; courteous and polished in society, among his own people he was a true Indian, alert and generous to a fault; to an enemy he was relentless as he was unforgiving, and led his warriors to many a successful battle against the unconquerable Sioux—an inevitable foe. He was an ardent advocate for peace and his intervention in behalf of the whites for the settlement of this country was an influence that is deserving of the highest of human rewards. The incidents which brought about his premature death may be related as follows: In the spring of 1855, Logan with a band of warriors, some women and children, went up in the valley of the Elkhorn to provide meat for the coming summer. Continuous attacks from the Sioux, however, annoyed the hunting party to such an extent, it became discouraged and turned its steps homeward. When nearing the Elkhorn, and presuming themselves safe beyond further attack, Logan and a chosen few went in the advance

and gave chase to a herd of elk they scared up, and unconsciously almost rode into the arms of a roving band of Sioux. A fight ensued immediately, but the Omahas, much weaker in numbers, sought protection in flight. Logan's scalp had long been coveted by the Sioux—for he was considered a great warrior—and they gave preference to his trail, and followed close in the chase. Fontenelle headed his faithful pony toward the Elkhorn, and would have escaped but in crossing the stream his animal mired in the quicksand and mud, and before he could extricate himself the enemy was upon the bank. Logan made a brave fight, selling his life dearly—killing five of the Sioux before he fell from his horse. The remaining Dakotahs then detached his scalp—a trophy of high honor—and rode away—just as reinforcements from the Omahas came up. Fontenelle's body was taken to Bellevue, where he was buried by the side of his father, amid much ostentation and elaborate pageantry, participated in by the entire tribe. His untimely death was a deep loss to the Omahas, for he had lived he would have accomplished much good for his people.

In the summer of 1870 a hunting party of Omahas went down on the Smokyhill, in Kansas, but game was scarce, and had it not been for the kindness and good offices of friendly whites, the Indians would have per-

ished, and as it was, did, in a small degree, suffer the pangs of hunger. This was their last hunt on the once great plains of the west, and realizing the hopelessness of depending on wild meat secured in the chase, for a subsistence, it was thus the child of nature abandoned the field and his favorite sport, through dire necessity, to cope in the struggle of life, with artifice; and became a diligent and progressive tiller of the soil. Fifty years ago the Omaha reservation was a vast area of rolling prairie; its inhabitants, the North American Indians; today the reservation is known as Thurston county; and the North American Indian yet its residents. But what a transformation. Now he ranks in the commonwealth as a citizen; votes at the election booth, and pays his personal taxes. On the Sabbath he attends Christian service, and in the week days his children will be found at school—apt and laborious pupils. For his neighbor, is the whiteman, and his once wild reservation, is now dotted with thriving churches, and crowded citadels of education; the whole land thickly populated with a prosperous and happy people.

[THE END.]

INDEX FOR "STORY OF AN OLD TOWN"
Indexed by Velma Cooper

Abbott, Al, 65
Allen, James T., 165
American Fur Co., 12, 22
Amsbury, Rev., 143
Amsbury, Wm. A., 57
Arlington, Aaron, 101
Arlington, ___, 108
Armell, ___, 91
Armstrong, George, 57
Asburn, Rev., 62
Ashley, Charles, 110-1
Ashley, Eva Louise, 143
Ashley, Fred, 160-1
Ashley, George, 160-1
Ashley, James, intro., 32, 57, 102, 124, 141-3, 160-1
Ashley, Jennie, 160-1
Ashley, John, 127, 160-2
Ashley, Mabel A., 54, 143
Ashley, Robert, 126, 162
Ashley, Robert, Mr. and Mrs., 62, 141
Ashley, Thomas R., 32, 56a, 57, 124, 143
Ashley, Wm. H., 77
Askwig, James, 101
Atkinson, ___ 58
Atwater, George, 124, 125, 149
Axling, Rev., 101
Ayoway River, 14

Babbitt, 110
Bacon, Calvin C., 124, 157
Bacon, Moses, 94
Baldwin, James H., 165
Banks, 124
Banks, wildcat, 49
Baptist church, 134
Barber, Berl, 105
Bard, Mark W., 23
Barker, Con, 29, 109
Barlow, Charles B., 57, 154, 155
Barlow, Emma, 155
Barlow, John, 155
Barlow, Rhoda, 155
Barnum, Guy, 112, 132
Bates, Wm., 96
Batt, Rev., 62
Bay, John, 91
Beard, Henry, 19
Beck, Wm. B., 98
Beilinski, Dominick, 95
Bellevue, 21, 67, 78-9, 80-1
Benjamin, Miss, 58
Bent, Jennie, 162
Best, Andrew J., 150-1
Big Elk, 137
Biggs, Emma, 95
Black, Samuel W., 23
Blackbird, 9-11
Blackstone, Charles, 132

Blair, John I., 138
Blake, Elmer, 60
Blue, Cora E. 158
Boat traffic, 65-66
Borum, E.D., 112
Boyd, James E. 163-4
Boyd, John M. 163
Boyle, Margurette, 93
Boyle, Patrick, 95
Brewster, George, 101
Brick yard, 124
Bross, Stephen Decatur, 32-33
Brown Emma, 159
Brown Hotel, Frontispiece, 31,fire 122, 132
Brown, Ida, 159
Brown, J.J. 164
Brown, Lettie, 159
Brown, Mary M. 159
Brown, Mr., 24, 31, 83
Brown, Mrs., suicide, 122-3
Brown Palace, 31
Brown, Samuel R., 164
Brown Wm. D., 83
Burpee, John L., 98
Burt Co. officers, 96
Burt, Francis, 20-1, 23
Butler, David, 24
Butts, Elizabeth, 146
Byers, W.N., 97
Byram, Alice E., 143, 160
Byram Brother' Store, 126
Byram, Eugene L., 160
Byram, Evangeline N., 160
Byram, George M., 160
Byram, George M., store photo 108a
Byram, Helen J., 160
Byram, Henry D., photo, 120a, 127, 160
Byram, H.D., home, photo 128a
Byram, Silas P. 160

Callahan, John, 133
Calnon,__ 86
Calnon, Flora, 54
Calnon, George F., 40
Calnon, James, 40, 58, 59, 60
Calnon, John A., 40, 41
Calnon, Lewis F., 40
Calnon, Mary Pauline, 40
Calnon, Michael, 40, 47, 48
Calnon, Thadeus B., 40
Calnon, Thomas E., 40
Calnon, Tim, 58
Calvert, Charles, 19
Canfield,___, 30
Canfield, Clara Belle, 157
Canfield, E.D. Ed., 34, 43, 57, 124, 157
Canfield, Mrs. E.D., 57
Canfield, Willis H., 158

Carr, Col., 89
Carr, Gen., 90
Carr, Robert, 97
Carson, Kit, 77-79
Carson, Kit, wife and children, 66-70
Carter, Jeremiah, 31, 160
Chapman, Alfred, 19
Charde, A.B., 101-2
Chase, John, 42
Chase, "Hi", 119
Catholic Church, 64
Catholic mass, 41 (first in Decatur)
Chestnut, Rev. Thomas, 93
Cheyebbes, 50, 87
Chicago and Northwestern, 29
Chicago, St. Paul and Minneapolis, 96
Chicot, Miles, first merchant at Tekamah, 97
Choyce, John T. 38, 125
Choyce, Miss, 155
Church, first in Nebr., 22
Claim clubs, 47-49, 86, 111
Claim jumpers, 29, 40
Clarncy, Wm., 84
Clark, Cap't. Wm., 7
Clark, Paulina, 101
Cline, Albert, 58
Cline, Henry (Hank D.), 33, 133
Clough, Mrs. Jane, 163
Coal, 125
Cody, Wm. (Buffalo Bill) 89-90
Cole, Herman, 112
Collier, Davic L., 42, 133
"Colonel Paul Place", 36
Columbus, 118
Comer, Mr., 105
Conger,___97
Coneally, John Eddie, 64
Conner, Capt. J.D., 55
Contest for Nebr. captial, 85
Cook, Dr. John, 93
Cooper, Rev. Isaac, 84
Corbin, A.N., 100
Corhart, Daniel, 133
Cornelius, Samuel, 100
Coronado, 74-5
Cottonwood Springs, 88
Council Bluffs, 7, 79
Court cases, 131-3
Covington, 93, 111
Covington News, 94
Coyle,___122, 148
Coyle, Peter, 160
Cragon, Frank, 125-6
Cramer, Cass, 156-7
Crawford, Mary, 153
Crockwell, J.D.M., 93

Cronk, Lafe, 62
Cross, Rev. Charles, 162-3
Cross, Wealthy, 162
Crounse, Lorenzo, 24
Crowley, Father, 64
Cuming City, 112
Cuming, Gov., 96
Cuming, Thos. B., acting terr. gov., 21
Curry, Judge, 38

Dakin, Charles R., 124, 155
Dakin, Miss, 58, 115
Dakota City, 93
Dakota County, 91
Dakotas, 68, 89
Dalrymple, J., 46
Darling, Charles A., 159
Darling, Levi L., 167-8
Darling, Mason, 59
Davis, Alexander, 84
Decatur in 1854, 23
Decatur in 1856, 118-120
"Decatur and South Pass Railroad", 109
Decatur bank, 123-4
Decatur Bicycle Club of 1898, photo, 80a
Decatur incorporated 1856, 24, 121
Decatur City Common Council, 43
Decatur, Commodore, see Bross, see Stephen A. Decatur
"The Decatur Eaglet", 125
The Decatur Herald, 124
Decatur, Mrs., 58
Decatur, origin, 23
Decatur's earliest settlers, 42-3
Decatur Silver Cornet Band, 127
Decatur Springs place
Decatur, Stephen A., 22, 24, 30, 47, 67, 115, 117
also see Bross
Decatur Townsite and Ferry Company, 24, 25, 35, 43, 120
Deroin, Frances, 78-9
De Smet, Father, 37
Dewitt, 110
Diddock, Walter, 138
Dillon, James, 33, 123
Doane, Cora, 148
Doane, Daisy, 148
Doane, George W., intro., 25, 42, 133, 148, 149
Doane, Guy, 148
Doane, Judge, 120
Doane, Wm., 148
Dominick, Paul, 36, 116-7
Dorsey, Michael, 95
Dowley, J.E., 46
Driscoll, John, 97
Drownings, 59-62
Drury, Walter E., 58, 124
Dunbar, Rev., 79
Dunn, Christopher C., intro., 37, 42, 45, 64, 109-114, 116-7
Dutton, Mr., 58

Eagleton, Wm. R., 59
Eclipse, 110
Election, 1857, Decatur's first, 43
Election, first in Burt Co., 96
Ellis, Rev., 79
Elm Creek, 110
Engelman, C., 39, 46
Episcopal apel, 62
Evans, Mike, 42, 45, 131, 133
Everett, Franklin, 105
Everett, Josiah and brothers, 103

Farley, Ed, 138
Feenan, John, 93
Fees, John, 100
Fenner, John, 93
Fires, 126-7
Fiscus, David, 66, 105
Fisher, Frank, 106
Ferry Company at Omahe, 83
FIRSTS as listed by A.B. De Milt
First births:
    First white baby born in Burt Co., Emma Peterson, p. 98
    First white baby born in Decatur, p. 121
    First white boy born on reservation, p. 162
    First white girl born on reservation, p. 162
First burial in Decatur cemetery, p. 109
First Catholic mass at Decatur, p. 41
First permanent church in Burt Co., p. 134
First church in Nebr., p. 22
First death in Decatur, p. 121
First Decatur City Council meeting, in 1858, p. 43
First drownings, pp. 59-60
First election, Burt Co., p. 96
First election at Decatur, Jan. 14, 1857, p. 43
First farmer at Decatur, p. 116
First governor of Nebr. terr., Francis Burt, p. 20
First lamps in Decatur, p. 142
Forst locomotive west of Chicago, p. 116
First Mayor of Decatur, S.T. Leaming, p. 44
First school teacher in Decatur, p. 158
First school term in Decatur, 1861. p. 57
First Masonic order in Nebr., p. 81
First merchant at Tekamah, Miles Chicot, p. 97
First millinery shop in Burt Co., p. 117
First Nebr. capitol, Omaha, p. 85
First newspaper in Nebr., at Bellevue, Nov. 14, 1854, p. 22
First payment to Omahas, p. 113
First postmaster at Tekamah, Olney Harrington, p. 110
First railroad survey in Nebr. Territory, p. 110
First saw mill man in Decatur, p. 162

First sod turned at Lyons, p. 162
First settlement by whites in Nebr., at Bellevue, p. 22
First settlers, Logan valley, p. 105
First settler at Oakland, Aaron Arlington, p. 101
First steam ferry at Decatur, p. 122
First territorial legislature, at Omaha in 1855, p. 21
First trees planted in Decatur, p. 160
First trial for murder in Nebr., p. 81

Fitser, Wm., 60
Fitzpatrick, John, 94
Florence, 22-23
Florence incorporated 1853, 22
Foley, James, 41
Foley, John, 41
Foley, Thomas, 41
Folsom, B.R., 21, 57, 88, 96, 97
Folsom, John B., 97
Folsom, Niles R., 97
Fontenelle, 79
Fontenelle, Albert, 37
Fontenelle, Amelia, 36
Fontenelle, Ella, 38
Fontenelle, Emily, 38
Fontenelle, Eugene, 38, 104
Fontenelle, Henry, intro., 10, 23, 37, 69, 103, 107, 114, 163
Fontenelle, Henry, residence, 34
Fontenelle, Logan, 13, 19, 37, 104, 170-2
Fontenelle, Lucien A., 36, 37, 38, 67
Fontenelle, Nattie, 38
Fontenelle, Susan, 37
Fontenelle, Tecumseh, 37
Fontenelle, Victoria, 38
Ford, Bob, 54
Ford, Charlie, 54
Fort Atkincon, 8, 78
Fort Calhoun, 8
Fort Sage, 76
Fowler,___58
Frazier, ____58
Freeland, John, 105
Freeland & Warner, 105
Freeman, Charles O., 96a, 167
Fremont, John C. 77-8, 80
Fuller, Azaziah B., intro., 30-2, 38, 42, 46-7, 122, 124, 125, 133, 153-4
Fuller, Clyde H., 153
Fuller, Harriet M., 153
Fuller, Helen G., 153
Fuller, Gertie, 57
Fuller, Kate, 153
Fuller, Lizzie, 153
Fuller, May C., 153
Fuller, Maryannetta, 153
Fuller, Mrs., A.B., 30-1
Furnas, Robert W., intro., 24, 144, 168-9

Gantz, Edith F., 59
Garber, Silas, 24
Gardner, John, 121
Garner, Miss, 160-1
Gatewood. James M/ 19
Gatewood, Major, 13
Gatewood, Shannon, 59
Gaylord, D.B., 43
Gaylord, H.B., 46
Gaylord, Wm., 36
German Baptist Church, 63
Gibson, Isaac, 97
Gilbert, Ben, 30
Gillick's Bend, 96
Glass, Herman, 24
Golden Springs, 149
Goodell, Charles, 42
Goodell, Franklin, 57
Goodell, T.C., 46
Goodwill, W.F., 97
Goszler, James, 19
Governors, territorial, 23
Graft, George B., 161
Grand Island, 118
Graves, Prof., 58
Gregg, Dr. Wm. B., 58
Greenhow, Emily R., 148
Griffey, George, 94
Griffin, Charles, 156
Griffin, D.C., 38, 155-6
Griffin, Mrs. D.C., 38
Griffin, Earl, 156
Griffin, Ed, suicide, 123
Griffin, Frank J., 32, 156
Griffin, George, 156
Griffin, Julia, 136
Griffin, Mary Frances, 156
Grist mill 124
Griswold, S.B., 43, 131
Griswall, Rev., 63

Hadley, ___ , 58
Haley, Bridget, 40
Hamilton, John, 138
Hamilton, Julia, 138
Hamilton, Lotta, 138
Hamilton, Marshall, 10
Hamilton, Miss, 58
Hamilton, Mr., 67
Hamilton, Pat, 113
Hamilton, Rev. Wm., 20, 63, 79, 127, 136-7
Hamlin, Mat, 138
Hanson, Prof., 58
Harney City, 93
Harrington, Olney, 96-7
Harris, Jim, 95

Hart brother, 103
Hart, Charles, 105
Hart, David, 60
Hart, James, 105
Hart, R.S. (Riley), 105
Haywood,___, 97
Heales, Giorge, 101
Heath House, 36
Henry, Dr., 48, 81-2
Henry, John, 64
Higley, A., 45
Higley, Addie F., 152
Higley, Edwin, 152
Higley, Frank E., 152
Higley, Herman, 152
Higley, Hiram, 47
Himler, Jesse E., 59
Hineman, Truman Hart, 24, 30-1
Hinman, 121
Hobbs,___, 31, 125, 142
Hobbs, Beattie, 58
Hobbs, Henry, 38
Hobbs, Lorenzo, 34, 38, 45, 47, 57, 132
Hobbs, Mayor, 44-5
Hobbs, Will 38, 57
Holcomb, Silas A., 24
Hollard, Sam, 28
Hollister, George, 81
Hollister,___ 86
Holton, Thomas, 132
Hoppock, L.D., 57, 125
Horgaugh, John A., 116
Horn, Capt., 65
Horn, Dr, 28
Horr, C.A., 91
Hull, Wm., 95
Hungate, Rev. J.P., 134
Hunting, Etta, 137-8
Huntington, Chas. S., 10
Hirsh, Abraham, 92
Hyde, I.R., 44

I.C. & A.L.R.R., 29
Incorporation, Bellevue, June 19, 1854m 22
Incorporation, Decatur, fall 1856, 24
Incorporation, Florence, 1853, 22
Incorporation, Omaha, Sept. 1, 1854, 22
Indian missions, 22
Indian scares, 55-6
Indian troubles, 86-90, 106
Independent, 101
Iowa Central Railroad, 25
Irish, O.H., 57
Isaacs, Charlotte, 152

Jackson, Mrs., 58
James, Frank, 53-4
James, Jesse, 53-4
Johnson, C.C. (Miss), 156
Johnson, James, 112
Johnson, Mr., 84
"Johny Smoker", 64
Jones, ___ 24, 28, 39, 40
Jones, A., 39-40
Jones, "Farmer Jones", 34
Jones, I.C., 132
Jones, John, 39-40
Jones, Mary, 39-40
Jones, Tom, 133

Kanesville, 82
Kansas Indians, 77
Kearney, 118
Kelso, Fran, 60
Kelso, Mary A. 147
Kendall, John, 133
Kenyon, M.J., 57, 124
Kerns, Adam, 44, 45, 46, 112, 133
Kerr, James D., 19
kinney, Mr., 67
Kipper, Mrs. Ludwig, 95
Kispert, John, 109
Kitts, ___, 58
Krepp, Moses, 91

La Barge, Captain, 65
La Clede, 76
La Flesche, Joseph, 19
Lake, Jesse, 59
Lake, Prof., 58
Lambert, Clement, 12, 23, 38, 47, 67, 114, 116
Lambert, Lizzie, 57
Lambert trading post, 113
Lampson, 96
Lange, F.E., 96, 149
Langley, Ralph, 59
Langley, R.G., 57
Langley, Wm. I., 59
Latta, James, 98
Latta, J.P., 97
Latta, W.W., 97
Latta Ranch, 112
Laughlin, Miss, 58
Laughlin, T.J., 47
Leaming, Anna, 145
Leaming, Charlotte, 145
Leaming, Collier D., 145
Leaming Edward, 145
Leaming, H.E.J., 145
Leaming, Lucy, 59
Leaming, Phoebe, 59
Leaming, (Captain) Silas T., intro, 24, 28, 29, 40, 43-4, 45, 46, 47, 109, 120, 132, 144, 145

Leeper, Dr., 101
Legislature, first territorial, 21
Lemmon, John S., 101
Leonard, John, 42
Lewis, Anna M., 147
Lewis, Jack, 66, 135
Lewis, John, intro., 65, 135, 147-8
Lewis, ___, 122
Lewis, Mary Evelyn, 147
Lewis, Mattie, 66
Lewis, Meriwether, Captain, 7
Lewis, Susan A., 66, 151
Lewis, Walter, 150
Lewis, William R., 147
Light, Rev. Galib, 63
Lisa, Samuel, 77
Littel, James, 57
Little Chief, 19
Lodge organizations, 57, 128
Logan Creek, name origin, 104
Long, Howard, 59
Long, Major, 76-7
Lovejoy, Reuben, 81
Loveland, T.A., 126-7
Low, Dr., 35
Lowe, Dr. Enos, 83-4
Lydick, H.C., 99
Lyons, Waldo, 103-4
Lyons, non-liquor clause, 104

Mail, carried from Onawa, 43
Mail carrier, 138-9
Manypenny, George W., 13, 19
Mansfield, Wilts, 60
Mapping of Decatur, 1857, 25
Marks and Ross, 101
Marsh, Henry, 133
Martin, Charles D., 94
Maryott, Charles, 161
Maryott & McHirron, 41
Mason, George W., 24, 32
Masonic order, first in Nebr., 81
Masters, Mr., 58
Matthewson, Chas. P. 143
Mayor, Decatur's first, 44
McBeath, William, 92
McBride, John, 29
McBride, Wm., 109
McComas, Mary, 169
McCrady, M., 58
McDonald, B.F., 127
McDonald, Tom, 113, 114
McGuire, Elisha, 100
McHirron, H.C., 57
McKinney, Rev. Ed, 22, 79
McKinney, L.B., 81
McMullin, Peter, 103, 104

McMurphy, John D., 28, 115-6
McNulty, Father, 147
McNutt, F.E., 34
Meacham, Sarah, 160
Me-ha tribe, 8,9,70
Mellish, Henry, 107-9
Merlier, Madame, 3607
Methodist church, 62-3
Miller, Dr. George, 82, 8405
Miller, Rev., 127
Miller's Hollow, 82
Mining company, 124-5
Mission, 137-8
Mission on Council Creek, 79
Mission, Presbyterian, 18, 79
Missouri Fur Co. post, 78
Missouri Territory, 76
Mitchell, Captain, 88
Moan, John, 93
Monk, Mr., 58
Moore, Mary C., 165
Niirem Robert, 64-5, 110, 148
Morley, Daniel E., 42, 158
Morley, George F., 59
Mormon Camp, 1845, 22
mormons, 80, 82, 83
Morrell, ___, 101
Morrison, Mr., 58
Morrow, Jack, 49-51
Morton, J. Sterling, 81
Morton, Thos., 22
Munsonkilled, 106
Murder trial, first in Nebr.,, 81
Murphy, ___, 86

Nance, Albinus, 24
Neary, James, 36
Nebraska, admission as state Mch. 11, 1867, p. 23
Nebraska Advocate, 103
Nebraska, territorial and state governors to 1899, p. 24
Nebraska statistics, 129-130
Nebraska territory, 20
Neville, 124
Nevitt, John, 96
Newport, 93
Newspaper, 124-5
Newspaper, first in Nebr. Terr., 22
Noise, ____, 19
North, B.L., 94
North, Major Frank, 89
Northwestern railroad, 85
Noyse, Charles, 124
Nutt, Sarah, 140-1
Nutt, William, 140-1

Oak, John, Pre-empted site of Oakland, 30, 101
Oakley, Nelson, 61
O'Brian, Major, 86
Ogg, J.I., 47
"Old Town Company", 81
Olinger, Adam, 96
Omadi, 91, 92, 94
Omaha, 84
Omaha Incorporation in 1854, 22
Omaha, territorial capital, 21
Omahas, 8-9, 13-5, 67-8, 113, 137-8, 142-4
Omaha Treaty, 13-19
Orchard, Charles C., 169
Orchard, Mabel G., 169
Orchard, Sam, 169-170
Ottesen, May, 38
Outhwaite, C., 133
Outhwaite, W.J., 57
Owens, Harry, 43
Owens, Mont, 59, 133
Owens, Perry, 133
Owens, Thomas, 59

Page, Ada, 165
Page, Ida, 165
Page, Jirah P. & Mrs., 103, 165-6
Page, Lewis W. 59, 165
Page, Lyle, 165
Page, Mrs. Mary C. 125-6
Page, Maud, 165
Page, W.S., 65, 167
Painter, Major, 144
Pappan, Emily, 37-8
Parish, Watson, 102, 124
Parker, F.W., 10
Paul, Mr., 121
Pawnees, 89, 150
Pecaut, Gustave, 93
Peebles, Rev. 104
Pender founded, 103
Percival, 121
Perry Alice, 58, 147
Perry, George, 147
Peterson, Emma, first white beby in Burt Co., 98
Peterson, Louis, 96, 112
Peterson, P.F., 97, 98
Philips, Charlie, 61
Phillips, Will, 112
Pineau, 70-1
Pineau River, 71
Pinkerton, Mary, 93
Plum Creek massacre, 87
Point, Wm., Billy, 46, 142
Ponca, 94
Poynter, Wm. A. 24
Presbyterian church, 63
Preston Seymore T., 42, 158-9

Price, ___, 124
Porter, Charles F., 24, 28, 45, 46, 57, 115
Purple, A.C., 21
Purple, H.C., 96
Putnam, Miss, 92

Quantrell, 53-4
Quin, John, 93
Quinn, ___, 58

Rafferty, Pete, 159
Ramsey, John S., 57
Ramseyer, J.S., 46
Railroad, 25, 29, 85, 96, 109
Railroad company organized in Decatur in 1857, 29
Railroad rumors, 24, 25
Railroad survey, 109
Rasch, John, 167
Ream, Henry, 92, 94
Reems, Adam, 162
Reubadeux, 78-9
Reyman, M.L., 100
Reynolds, R.W., 57
Richardson, Levi, 103
Richardson, W.A., 23
Road marked, Decatur to West Point, 117
Robertson, Gen., 96
Rocky Mountain Fur Co., 77
Rohde, ___, 125
Root, Calvin, 146-7
Root, Frank, 147
Root, Nevada, 147
Root, Sophie, 157
Rork, P.L., 99
Rose, ___,29
Ross, Dr. Louis Phillip, 62, 166
Rust, George W., 92
Ryan, Father, 41

Samuels, Mrs., mother of James boys, 52-4, 58
Sandig, Ernest, 96
Sarpy, Col. Peter A., 12, 22-3, 67, 78-80, 114
Sarpy's wives, 114
Saunders, Alvin, 23
Saunsoci, Louis, 17, 19, 80
Saw mill, 124
School, 57-9
Scidmore, George, 132
Dears, ___ 58
Sears, Dr. Edward, 162
Secord, Prof., 58
Seeley, ___, 84
Shafer, Charlie, 145
Shaffer, E., 97
Shaw, Miss, 58

Sherlls, Dr., 39
Shull & Hartman, 92
Sidmore, ___, 34
Silver Creek, 30
Sioux, 68, 77, 87, 89-90, 94, 137, 171-2
Sioux City Co., 93
Sloan, Dr., 63
Sloan, Rev., 143
Smith, B.B., 58
Smith, Doc, 86
Smith, E.G., 58
Smith, Joe, 105
Smith, Rev., 92
Smith, Samuel, 61, 95
Snyder, Chloe, 166
Snyder, Jacob, 34, 43, 133
Sod house, 28-9
Spielman, H.M., 100
Spielman, Jesse, 100
Spotted Tail, 88
Sprague, John, 133
Standing Hawk, 19
Stanton, Ida, 59, 140
Steam ferry, 122
Steamer, side wheel, 65
Steamer, stern wheel, 65-6
Stevens, Abbie, 33
Stevens, F.H., 44, 46-7
Stevens & Welch, 42
Stork, J.H., 99
Straight, Col. George F., 124
Summit Springs, 89
Swenson, Harry S., 126

Taff, John, 144
Taggart, Rev. J.M., 134
Tall Bull, 89
Tallman, Mina, 167
Tartarrax, 75
Teachers listed, 57-8
Tekamah in 1855, 23
Tekamah, founded, 97
Tekaman, incorporated in 1855, 23
Territorial capital, Omaha, 21
Thayer, John M., 24
Thomas, Abbie, 32
Thomas, George P. 97-8
Thomas, Ira, 103
Thomas, Lizzie, 32
Thomas, Mrs., 32
Thomas, Waldo, 32
Thompson, Lizzie, 58
Thompson, Sussis H. 152
Thompson, Waldo, 108
Thurston County organized, 103
Tieville, 64-6, 134-5, 148

Towel, ___, 58
Townsites, 49
Trading post, 22, 39
Tucker, William, 94
Turn Around TAvern, 28, 35, 113

Vale, Rev. James, 134-5
Veil, James, 66
Vigilance committee, 56
Village Maker, 19
Vincent, Michael, 65

Washburn, Miss, 58
Welch, Frank, 10, 41-2, 44, 47, 121, 145-6
Welch, Miss, 58
Welch, Theresa Jane, 117
Western Mail & Stage Co., 138
Western Stage Co. and Mail Route, 31
Whitacre, Dr. Thomas H., 24, 25, 35-6, 41, 45, 46-7, 108, 120, 131
Whitcomb, Miss, 58
White Breast, 106
White Eagle, 71
White, Albert, 133
White, Catherine M., 151
White, Elizabeth, 151
White, George J., 66, 151
White, James P. 151
White, Jason B. 59
White, Lizzie, 59
White, Louisa, 152
White, Lewis B. 151
White, Major, 144
White, Margurette M., 151
White, Mary J., 151
White, Widow, 151
Whitelawn, Tom, 159
Whittier, Dr. J.B., intro., 54, 139-141, photo 136a
Whitty, Thomas, 131-2
Wigle, Jesse, 91
Wilber, Matthew C., 28, 34-5, 120, 131-2
Wilber, Mrs. M.C., 34-5
Wilcox, Almira M., 147
Wilder, Byron L., 166-7
Wilder, Edward, 59, 166
Wilder, James R., 59, 166
Wilder, Maud, 166
Wilder, Stanton, 59, 166
Wilder, Z.T., 97
Williams, Jesse, 83
Wilson, F.D., 61
Wilson, James E., 46, 117

Wilson, O.F., 121
Wilson, Sheriff, 111
Wilson, tavern keeper, 29
Wilson, W.W., 43-4
Winnebagos, 106, 143, 144
Winter of 1856, 120
Winter of 1857, 43
Wolf, Clara, 166
Wood Creek, 12, 37, 59, 61, 107, 114
Woods, George T. 91
Woods, ___, 12
Wood's Hotel, 126
Woodward, ___, 124

Y'Deen, David J., 152
Y'Deen, Emil F., 152
Y'Deen, Frank O., 152-3
Y'Deen, John H., 152
Y'Deen, Mary L., 59, 152-3
Yeaton, Joel, 105
Yellow Smoke, 19
Young, Brigham, 80
Young, Decatur, 147
Young, S.T., 42, 147